

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

**Low payoff
for Knicks'
high payroll**

Back page

New York guard Stephon Marbury



**Ukraine parliament
votes to pull troops
from Iraq promptly**

Page 3



**Rapper Ludacris
answers
to his fans**

Page 18

Volume 2, No. 275 © SS 2005 MIDEAST EDITION

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2005

Allawi: Some zones unsafe; vote to go on

Iraqi prime minister talks with Bush, vows to enlarge army

Page 3

California rocked



**Rescuers dig
for mudslide
survivors
as storms
cause chaos**

Page 10

A boulder some 25 feet high blocks both lanes of Topanga Canyon Road on Monday as electrical contractors fix broken power and communication lines in Malibu, Calif. No injuries were reported, but the road remains closed. The succession of storms that brought drenching rains to Southern California and snow to the north has been responsible for at least 12 deaths.

AP

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States

Blade in shoe: Federal prosecutors have dropped a charge filed against a man accused of trying to board an airplane in Hawaii with a blade hidden in one of his shoes, the man's attorney said Monday.

Randall Rustick, 33, of Fairfax, Va., was charged with attempting to board an aircraft with a concealed weapon after he was arrested Dec. 21 at Honolulu International Airport.

Rustick didn't know the three-inch blade was in his shoe, and had cooperated with prosecutors and the FBI, defense attorney Howard Luke said.

Robert Blake trial: Jurors in the Robert Blake murder trial in Los Angeles heard for the first time that the actor may have been afraid of an unidentified killer. They also got their first glimpse of the long-nosed, World War II-era revolver used to kill the actor's wife.

On Monday, police criminalist Michael Mastrocovo unwrapped the gun that was found in a trash bin, and clicked the magazine of ammunition that was in the chamber when it was collected.

Blake, 71, is charged with murder, soliciting others to commit a murder and lying in wait in the 2001 shooting death of wife Bonny Lee Bakley.

Police detective Pinner Pinner acknowledged on the witness stand that Blake said he feared he would be the next victim on the night his wife's slaying.

Tulsa drug charges: Two jurors seated in the Tulsa jury trial of a former undercover agent who sent dozens of blacks to prison on bogus drug charges have ties themselves to law enforcement.

On an ex-policeman and the other, a woman, is related to an officer in Tulsa, the town where Tom Coleman made his discredited busts.

Coleman is accused of lying about his own arrest record in evidentiary hearings for four defendants in 2003. He could face up to 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine on each of three felony charges of aggravated perjury.

Philadelphia mayor bugged: Federal prosecutors have filed court papers detailing testimony they plan to present in an ongoing investigation that involved FBI wiretapping of Philadelphia city officials and their political supporters.

Authorities have declined to explain why they bugged Mayor John Street's office in 2003, and he has denied any wrongdoing.

However, according to court documents filed Monday, Street's former finance director, Janice Davis, will testify that the mayor "instigated her to file a firm's recommendation" by Ronald A. White, a close ally of Street's and a central figure in the probe.

The testimony detailed in the court papers will be presented at a trial scheduled to begin Jan. 18.

Stain baby case: The surviving daughters of a Texas woman accused of killing her 10-month-old baby by cutting off her arms could be returned to the custody of their father.

A tentative agreement was reached Monday to return the girls, ages 6 and 9, to their father, John Schlosser, but the agreement requires a judge's approval. The Dallas Morning News reported.

Dena Schlosser, a 35-year-old Plano housewife with a history of mental illness, was charged with capital murder Nov. 22 after she told a 911 operator that she had severed baby Margaret's arms.

Allegations of aiding terrorism: The attorney for a lawyer accused of helping a convicted terrorist communicate with his fol-



Fla. hurricanes: Sailboats washed ashore by Hurricane Frances on Sept. 5 rest in a parking lot in Fort Pierce, Fla. While defending its handling of disaster assistance during the four hurricanes that hit Florida last year, the Federal Emergency Management Agency revealed Monday that it overpaid \$12 million in relief to 3,500 Floridians and is trying to recoup the money. The agency blamed the problem on a "computer glitch." "We've found that the majority of concerns raised regarding assistance provided to individuals in Florida ... are not representative of widespread fraud," said Daniel Craig, director of FEMA's recovery division.

lowers suggested to jurors in New York that they would be fighting terrorism by exonerating his client.

The attorney, Michael Tigar, finished his closing argument Monday on behalf of the civil rights lawyer Lynne Stewart by saying he feared Islamic or other fundamentalists were going to win.

After Tigar finished, Assistant U.S. Attorney Anthony Barkow began a two-day government rebuttal of the defense arguments on behalf of Stewart, Arabic interpreter Mohamed Yousry and postal employee Ahmed Abdel Sattar.

Prosecutors say all three helped the imprisoned Egyptian sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman communicate with followers in Egypt.

Medical malpractice reform: Most Americans see health care and insurance costs as a more pressing problem than malpractice lawsuits, a survey says, although the Bush administration often cites litigation as a reason for high medical bills.

The Kaiser Family Foundation, a nonprofit organization that studies health care issues, and the Harvard School of Public Health said reducing malpractice jury awards ranked 11th on a list of 12 items people thought should be health care priorities for the president and Congress.

Named most often, by 63 percent of respondents, was lowering the cost of health care and insurance, followed closely by making Medicare more financially sound and increasing the number of Americans with insurance.

Bush is seeking a \$250,000 cap on non-economic damages that compensate for pain and suffering, saying large malpractice awards are driving up the costs of business and insurance and forcing doctors to give up their practices.

World

War crimes suspect: A Bosnian Defense Ministry investigation found no evidence that war crimes suspect Ratko Mladic used Bosnian Serb military facilities to hide from the U.N. war crimes tribunal, contrary to claims by the European Union peacekeepers in Bosnia.

British Major Gen. David Leakey said last month that peacekeepers had found evidence that Mladic hid in a Bosnian Serb Army-controlled underground bunker in eastern Bosnia as recently as last summer.

The Hague, Netherlands-based court

wants to try Mladic on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity for actions during Bosnia's 1992-1995 war.

Ukrainian elections: Viktor Yanukovich, the losing candidate in Ukraine's presidential vote, said Tuesday that he would appeal to the Supreme Court over the announcement of opponent Viktor Yushchenko's electoral victory.

The final official tally of the Dec. 26 vote showed Yushchenko with 51.99 percent and the Kremlin-favored Yanukovich with 44.2 percent, the Central Election Commission announced late Monday, formally declaring Yushchenko the victor 15 days after the balloting.

Military

Navy landing field: Internal Navy e-mail messages reveal a lack of objectivity in the choice of a proposed landing field in eastern North Carolina, attorneys trying to block the field said in newly filed court papers.

The skeptical e-mail messages — including one in which an environmental planner complained to a colleague of having to "reverse engineer" the process to justify the outcome — were not isolated excerpts as the Navy contends, opponents said.

Opponents want a federal judge in Raleigh to block the landing field until the Navy does another site selection and takes the required hard look at environmental effects on nearby Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge.

War on terrorism

Gitto detainees: Five Guantanamo Bay prisoners, including the last four British detainees and an Australian who allegedly knew of plans for the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks but was never charged, will be released within weeks by the United States, British and Australian officials said Tuesday.

The Pentagon later confirmed it was releasing four Britons and an Australian from Guantanamo, but it did not identify them.

Stories and photos from wire services



Yanukovich

Allawi: Some areas of Iraq too unsafe for voters

By NICK WADHAMS
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Prime Minister Ayad Allawi said Tuesday that some areas of Iraq will probably be too unsafe to take part in the Jan. 30 elections, his first public acknowledgment that the government would not be able to exert control in key areas controlled by insurgents.

Allawi promised, however, to increase the size of the army in the face of a bloody insurgency, whose latest victims included 13 Iraqis killed by two bombings.

Allawi also spoke by telephone Tuesday with President Bush for about 10 minutes to reaffirm the importance of holding the elections as scheduled, the White House said.

White House press secretary Scott McClellan said that in the phone call, the two leaders underscored the importance of going ahead with the election as planned.

"This was a discussion to talk about the ongoing preparations for the upcoming elections," McClellan said. "Both leaders reiterated the importance of moving forward on the date set by the Independent Iraqi Election Commission of Jan. 30."

In a news conference, Allawi said the government had allocated \$2.2 billion to expand the army from 100,000 to 150,000 troops and provide it with new weaponry. Iraq's armed forces are poorly trained and often under-equipped, making them an easy target for insurgents who want to scuttle the elections.

He acknowledged that some areas of Iraq likely would be too unsafe to participate in the landmark balloting for a constitutional assembly.

The country's volatile Anbar province west of Baghdad and areas in the north around Mosul have seen little preparation for the vote.

"Hostile forces are trying to hamper this event and to inflict damage and harm on the march and the guarantee for the participation



In Baghdad, an Iraqi police officer on Tuesday walks past a poster advertising this month's general elections. Prime Minister Ayad Allawi acknowledged Tuesday that some areas of Iraq likely would be too unsafe to participate in the landmark balloting for a constitutional assembly.

of all in the elections," Allawi said. "Certainly, there will be some pockets that will not be able to participate in the elections for these reasons, but we think that it will not widespread."

Allawi is a candidate in the election and has been increasingly visible in recent days. The news conference was his second in as many days, and he stood before several Iraqi flags and signs that read "Security and Safety First."

Meanwhile, violence across Iraq continued. A roadside bomb hit a minibus full of Iraqis in Yusufiyah, 10 miles south of Baghdad, said the director of the town's hospital, Dawoud al-Masri.

Al-Taie said the bomb exploded several minutes after a U.S. convoy passed, but there was no indication the convoy was the intended target.

A suicide car bomber who targeted a police headquarters in Tikrit killed six people, U.S. military spokesman Maj. Neal O'Brien said, and police officials who spoke on condition of anonymity said 12 were wounded.

Two militant groups claimed responsibility for the Tikrit attack. In statements posted on a Web site, the Ansar al-Sunna Army group said it parked a car filled with explosives near the station and then blew it up, while al-Qaida in Iraq, of Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, said one of its members carried out the "martyrdom attack."

Both statements could not be independently

verified but such contradicting statements are rare. The Web sites where the statements appeared frequently air such claims of responsibility.

The last two days have seen a new surge of insurgent attacks in the weeks before the balloting, with four roadside bombings and suicide strikes on Iraqi and American forces Monday.

While Shiites are expected to vote in large numbers, Sunni Arabs, who make up about 20 percent of Iraq's estimated 26 million people, say it is far too dangerous to hold the election this month, and many are refusing to participate. Failure by the Sunni Arabs to participate would undermine the election's credibility.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari said his government will meet Sunday with parties planning to boycott the election to try to persuade them to participate.

In an interview in Cairo, Egypt, Zebari said the Iraqi Committee for Peace and Solidarity, a nongovernmental organization, will host a Jan. 16 conference on reconciliation between the government and its opponents in Baghdad.

Zebari identified one of the boycott groups invited to the meeting as the Association of Muslim Scholars, an influential body of Sunni clerics.

The association modified its position on the elections this week, saying it was prepared to participate if the United States and the Iraqi government spelled out a timetable for withdrawing foreign troops from Iraq. The United States rejected the proposal.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Monday, at least 1,355 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,065 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is three higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Monday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Ukraine, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, three; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,217 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 956 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

By the latest deaths reported by the military:

■ A roadside bomb destroyed an armored vehicle Monday in southwest Baghdad, killing two U.S. soldiers.

The latest identifications reported by the Defense Department:

■ Army Spc. Dwayne J. McFarlane Jr., 20, Cass Lake, Minn.; died Sunday in Baghdad, when his patrol was hit by a roadside bomb. Assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, N.Y.

■ Marine Capt. Joseph E. Fite, 23, Round Rock, Texas; killed Sunday in Anbar province; assigned to the Marine Forces Reserve's 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, Austin, Texas.

Ukraine's parliament votes to pull troops out of Iraq

By ALEKSANDAR VASOVIC
The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — The Ukrainian parliament called Tuesday for an immediate withdrawal of the country's peacekeepers from Iraq. The move was not surprising but clearly reflected growing national dismay over the mission.

The parliament's call came two days after eight Ukrainian soldiers died in an explosion at an ammunition dump in Iraq. The blast was reported as an accident, but a top commander later raised suspicions that it could have been a terrorist action.

On Monday, President Leonid Kuchma ordered the foreign and defense ministries to develop a plan for withdrawing Ukraine's troops from Iraq within the first half of 2005.

The parliament, in a 308-0 vote, called on Kuchma to accelerate the process by issuing an immediate decree on withdrawal.

Motion pressures outgoing president to accelerate withdrawal plan

There was no immediate response from Kuchma to the parliament move and Valeriy Chauliy, an analyst with the Kiev-based Razumkov think-tank, said he expected the final decision on a pull-out would come only after a new president takes office.

U.S. State Department spokesman Adam Ereli on Monday called Ukraine an important supporter of efforts in Iraq and said officials expect any change in troop levels to be coordinated with coalition forces "in a measured way."

"I would reject any notion that anybody is running scared in this matter," he said. "What is done in the future should be in no way dependent from what has been contributed in the past, which is brave and courageous service in support of a noble cause."

Department of Defense spokesman Lt. Col. Barry Venable said no specific plans have been made yet to deal with the withdrawal.

"There have been coalition partners who have departed before, and there are ways to cover the Ukrainian forces' duties," he said. "We'll make adjustments."

Ukrainian opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko, who also supports a withdrawal, on Monday was declared winner of the presidential election, although it is not clear when he might take office.

Defense Ministry spokesman Andriy Lysenko said the military has "an approximate plan for the withdrawal, which would last some two months."

"The military will fulfill the political decision as soon as we receive an order from the president," he said.

Earlier, the cash-strapped Ukrainian military announced it was preparing for a phased withdrawal from Iraq by the end of 2005 due to logistic and financial problems.

According to the Central Command Web site, Ukraine has one peacekeeping infantry brigade in Iraq, or about 1,650 troops.

A withdrawal could be a significant symbolic blow for the U.S.-led operation, not only because of the Ukrainian contingent's size but because of the country's reputation for eagerly participating in dangerous peacekeeping missions.

It was a major component of the ill-fated peacekeeping operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992-95, and Ukraine currently has peacekeepers in Sierra Leone. Kuchma recently en-

dorsed sending troops to take part in the United Nations observer mission in the Golan Heights.

The situation in Iraq has deteriorated and as a consequence we lost our men," acting Defense Minister Oleksandr Kuzmuk was quoted as saying on Monday by the Interfax news agency.

Yushchenko's campaign manager, Oleksandr Zinchenko, said Monday that withdrawal was a difficult process that involved political, finance, military and diplomatic details, but stressed that the issue would be one of Yushchenko's priorities.

Stripes reporter Leo Shane II contributed to this report from Washington.



Above: Pfc. Billy Bailey, from left, and Staff Sgt. Joey Washington prepare to enter a room as 1st Lt. Dave Lucas opens a door in a house being raided by soldiers from Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment. Soldiers never know what's on the other side of the doors when they raid or search Iraqi houses.

Right: Spc. Jose Mendoza uses a metal detector to search the yard of a house the soldiers were searching. Other soldiers search cars found in the yard.

PHOTOS BY JASON CHUDY/Stars and Stripes



Soldiers hope for the best, expect the worst in raids

BY JASON CHUDY
Stars and Stripes

BAGHDAD — It doesn't matter how good the intelligence is, soldiers entering a house during a raid say they can't know what's on the other side of the front door.

When soldiers of Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment raided a house in a west-central Baghdad neighborhood Monday, they were expecting the worst. Intelligence reports stated there were more than a dozen heavily armed insurgents inside.

Instead of fighters, there were families. Soldiers quickly moved them all out of the house, and searched it and the surrounding grounds, finding only three loaded AK-47 magazines, but no assault rifle.

Most of the unit's soldiers have raided only a few houses, but the Battery B platoon leader, 1st Lt. Dave Lucas, has more than a few estimates he's either raided or searched more than 1,000 homes while assigned as the fire support officer for Company A, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

He said that most of the raids end up without gunfire from either side.

"Most of the time when they've got families in there, they're not stupid," he said about raid suspects. "They don't want us to fire with their families there."

"Everyone except one went quietly," he said of his raid experiences. A suspect tried to run, but was caught without shots being fired.

Despite the odds being in favor of an uneventful search or raid, soldiers say they still must prepare for the worst case scenario.

"You're always going into the house nervous, always nervous," said Staff Sgt. Joey Washington, 25, of Raleigh, N.C. "Well, I wouldn't call it nervous, I'd call it anxious."

"From the beginning, you never know," said Sgt. David MacDonald, 24, of Memphis, Tenn. "You've got to be prepared for anything."

"I'm always hoping the intel is wrong," he added. "If I can go through the whole thing without firing a shot, that's OK."

E-mail Jason Chudy at: chudyj@mail.strips.osd.mil

31st MEU members say goodbye to veteran Marine

Marines from the Okinawa-based 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit held an unusual gathering Monday night, performing a retirement ceremony at an air base near Iraq.

The ceremony honored Gunnery Sgt. Christopher W. Burnett, who officially retires July 1 after 20 years in the Marine Corps. But Burnett didn't want to spend the last year of his "twilight tour" away from the unit, so he prepared to go with the unit to Iraq.

"It took me a while to get here, but I'm here," Burnett said in an emotional farewell to his fellow Marines in Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265, based at Al Asad.

"I'm excited about leaving, don't get me wrong. But I'll miss you all. And I'll be thinking about you."

Following a flag ceremony, tape recordings of "Auld Lang Syne," "Anchors Aweigh" and "The U.S. Marine Corps Hymn" were played as the Marines stood at attention.

Burnett went to pack his final belongings; he was hoping to head to Okinawa on Tuesday to start the process of officially separating from the service.

A long shot

A sniper with the 1st Battalion,

23rd Marine Regiment has been credited with the longest confirmed kill in Iraq, according to a Marine Corps news release.

Sgt. Herbert B. Hancock, chief scout sniper of Sniper Platoon, Company B, shot at four insurgents from 1,050 yards away during the November assault on Fallujah, the Marines said. Hancock,

retired his own counterfire was called in on the positions.

"One had a black [outfit] on," Hancock said, according to the release. "I shot and he dropped. Right in front of him another got up on his knees looking to try and find out where we were, so I dropped him, too. After that, our mortars just hammered the position."

The snipers measured the distance by comparing an eight-digit map grid of their own position with the eight-digit map grid fired upon by the Marine mortar teams. It came out at 1,050 yards. Hancock made the shots with an M40A3 sniper rifle, the Marines said.

REPORTERS' NOTEBOOK

Jason Chudy
and Joseph Giordano

a 35-year-old native of Bryan, Texas, is a reservist like the rest of the 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines.

In his civilian life, he's a police officer, but has been a Marine sniper since 1992.

According to the Marine Corps release, Hancock and his spotter, Cpl. Geoffrey L. Flowers, were sent into Fallujah on Nov. 11 to find the source raining down mortar fire on their company command post.

After moving through a series of buildings to the edge of the Euphrates River, Hancock and Flowers set up atop a large building, spotting the mortar teams about 1,000 yards away. Hancock shot at least four insurgents who were firing the mortars, before the Ma-

Colonel running back

When Spc. Phil Predoel of Headquarters Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment was chosen to represent the unit at the battalion soldier of the month board, he knew the panel members would ask questions ranging from the unit's mission and rules of engagement to first aid and land navigation.

The board also asks about the unit's history, the regimental crest and the 1st Cavalry Division's patch.

Predoel had been studying for the board, but military mission and history weren't the only thing on his mind. It's football playoff time.

When a board member asked



JOSEPH GIORDANO/Stars and Stripes

Gunnery Sgt. Christopher W. Burnett of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit bids his squadrons mates farewell at a retirement ceremony in his honor Monday night at Al Asad.

him who designed the division's patch, he knew it was Col. Ben Dorsey and his wife at Fort Bliss, Texas, many years back.

But that's not what came out of his mouth.

"At the board, for some unconscious reason, I said Colonel and Mrs. Dorsey Levin's," he said.

Dorsey Levin is a running back with the playoff contender Philadelphia Eagles.

"They asked me to repeat myself a couple of times," he said, "and I said it a couple of times."

He didn't catch on what he

was saying until he noticed a couple of board members with smiles on their faces.

Though the board didn't tell him whether it credited him with a correct answer, he did come in second out of all the candidates.

Stars and Stripes reporters Joseph Giordano and Jason Chudy contributed to this report. Giordano is currently embedded with Marines near Fallujah, Iraq, and can be reached at: giordanoj@mail.strips.osd.mil. Chudy is embedded with the 10th Mountain Division near Baghdad and can be reached at: chudyj@mail.strips.osd.mil

Hospital finds new home at FOB Speicher

BY STEVE LIEWER
Stars and Stripes

The 67th Combat Support Hospital has moved its patient wards into a pair of buildings at Forward Operating Base Speicher in Tikrit, Iraq, the hospital's commander said Tuesday.

Lt. Col. Karen Gausman said the two former Iraqi air force barracks had been used to house 4th Infantry Division soldiers during the first Operation Iraqi Freedom troop rotation last year but had been abandoned when 1st Infan-

Patient wards formerly housed in tents now in buildings

try Division troops took over the base in February.

The hospital formerly had been housed in a series of interconnected tents on the other side of the base. Patients' rooms will be in the two buildings, which are connected by a covered walkway, Gausman said, while operating rooms, laboratories and the pharmacy remain next door in tents.

The new hospital is near the main dining facility, gym and

post exchange.

"We're much closer to all the amenities," she said.

Gausman said the site was identified about six months ago.

Contractors began renovating the buildings in September and completed the work just after Christmas. She said the new emergency room opened Dec. 29 and received its first patient within half an hour. The 67th CSH hosted a grand-opening ceremony

Jan. 4. Two new helipads also were built nearby.

The chief advantages to the new buildings, Gausman said, are cleanliness and security. It is difficult to keep dust out of tents, and canvas offers no protection against mortars that sometimes are fired onto the base.

"The new buildings) do provide a concrete structure, so we're not running for the bunkers with our patients," she said.

The 67th CSH deployed to Iraq from its home base in Würzburg, Germany, in January 2004. It is scheduled to return during the next few weeks. The unit also opened a \$450,000 hospital at Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul in November, according to a news release from the Multinational Force Iraq. That hospital proved valuable a month later, when a suicide bomber detonated explosives in the chow hall at Marez, killing 22 people and injuring 69 others.

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Handshake for the wounded

Lance Cpl. Stacy Alexander of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines Weapons Company, who is being treated at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany for wounds received in Iraq, talks with Marine Sgt. Maj. Wayne R. Bell of the 1st Marine Division operating in Alamar Province in Iraq. Several Marine sergeant majors visited wounded servicemen on Monday.

TONO GOODMAN
Courtesy of the U.S. Army



Ark. Guard soldier who sued Army over stop loss back in Iraq

BY CARYN ROUSSEAU
The Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Spc. David Qualls, who sued to challenge the Army's policy requiring him to serve longer than the term of his enlistment contract, is back in Iraq. "He seems to be doing OK," Betty McElvane, Qualls' mother-in-law, said Monday. "My daughter talks to him over the Internet just about every day. She said that everything was going OK."

Qualls and seven other unnamed U.S. soldiers filed a lawsuit last month challenging the military's stop-loss policy that allows the extension of active-duty deployments during times of war or national emergencies.

The lawsuit, filed while Qualls was on leave, argues that the enlistment contracts are misleading because they make no explicit reference to the policy. The eight soldiers are believed to be the first active-duty personnel to file such a lawsuit.

A judge denied Qualls' request for the restraining order after the government argued that allowing Qualls to stay on leave would set a dangerous precedent.

Qualls was the only named plaintiff in the case. The other seven, listed as John Does to protect their privacy, are now serving in Iraq or are en route to Iraq, according to court papers. Qualls, from Morrilton, said he signed up in July 2003 for a one-year stint in the Arkansas National Guard but has been told he will remain on active duty in Iraq until next year.

France won't call reporter's disappearance a kidnapping

The Associated Press

PARIS — France is "totally mobilized" in its search for a reporter and her translator missing for nearly a week in Iraq, the foreign minister said Tuesday.

But Michel Barnier refused to say that Florence Aubenas of the Paris-based daily Liberation may have been abducted — a scenario her editors acknowledge appears increasingly likely.

"I won't talk of kidnapping," Barnier said on RMC radio. "We are looking for information. We have made all the contacts that are useful. We are totally mobilized."

The disappearance last Wednesday of Aubenas and her Iraqi translator, Hussein Hanoun al-Saadi, has sparked debate in France about whether media should still be sending reporters to Iraq.

The government has advised against sending journalists there and Barnier said his ministry would host media representatives Tuesday for

talks about trying to ensure reporters' safety.

"You have the responsibility of informing people," Barnier said. "We, the public authorities, have the responsibility of telling you that Iraq is a dangerous, very dangerous, country."

Barnier added that working conditions for journalists there are increasingly difficult, and "the threats of kidnapping are frequent and never stop growing."

He noted that many French media have decided to post reporters to neighboring countries instead but said the ultimate decision on whether to go to Iraq rests with media representatives themselves.

Aubenas and al-Saadi were last seen Wednesday morning leaving France for Baghdad hotel.

Their disappearance leaves France facing the possibility of another hostage crisis just weeks after two other French reporters, Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot, were released after four months of captivity by Islamic militants in Iraq.

Bulgaria inspected as likely U.S. host

The Associated Press

SOFIA, Bulgaria — The commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Europe, Gen. James Jones, arrived Tuesday in Bulgaria to inspect military sites that could host American troops as part of a Pentagon plan to create new, flexible bases in Eastern Europe.

After talks with Defense Minister Nikolai Svinarov, a ministry spokesman quoted Jones as saying that the United States was interested in three military sites — an air field, a sea port and a training ground.

According to Vladimir Preleзов, the spokesman, Jones said one of the sites could be used as "a training facility for NATO's rapid reaction force."

Jones is expected to tour two military sites on Wednesday — the air field of Bezmer and the Novo Selo training area, which have already been identified as possible locations for future U.S. bases in Bulgaria.

Bezmer and Novo Selo are located in central-eastern Bulgaria, some 160 miles east of the capital, Sofia, and 56 miles west of the Black Sea port of Burgas.

Bulgaria, a staunch U.S. ally in the Balkans, allowed U.S.-led forces to use the military airport near Burgas during the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Bulgaria also contributed forces to the coalition in Iraq and has reported seven deaths.

Bulgaria, which joined NATO last April along with six other ex-communist nations, has declared its willingness to provide training grounds for U.S. troops.

U.S. officials have also said they could use Bulgarian sites to deploy troops on rotational training tours, but the Pentagon has not made a final decision yet.

Inmate gives testimony in Abu Ghraib trial

BY T.A. BADGER

The Associated Press

FORT HOOD, Texas — A Syrian inmate at Abu Ghraib said Army Spc. Charles Graner Jr. was the Baghdad prison's primary torturer who laughed while physically abusing him and threatened to kill him more than once.

Amin al-Sheikh, testifying via videotaped deposition shown in court Tuesday, said Graner also made him eat pork and drink alcohol, in violation of his Muslim faith, and that he listened through his cell wall while Graner and other Americans forced a Yemeni prisoner to eat from a toilet.

Graner is the first soldier accused in the Abu Ghraib scandal

Prosecution alleges Spc. Graner was ringleader of prison scandal

to go on trial, and prosecutors allege he was the ringleader of the abuse. Three guards from the 372nd Military Police Company have pleaded guilty to abusing detainees.

Asked if Graner appeared to enjoy hurting him, al-Sheikh said through an interpreter: "He was laughing... He laughed. He was whistling. He was singing."

Graner, a reservist, is charged with conspiracy to maltreat detainees, two counts of assault, dereliction of duty and committing indecent acts. He faces up to 1½ years in a military prison if the jury of four Army officers and six enlisted men convict him on all

counts. Testimony began Monday.

Al-Sheikh said he went to Iraq in 2003 to fight U.S.-led forces, and he was taken to Abu Ghraib after being captured with AK-47 assault rifles, grenades and bomb-making material.

While being kept at a tent camp next to Abu Ghraib, al-Sheikh said, he was wounded in the leg and chest in a shootout with Americans after he obtained a handgun from an Iraqi guard because he feared for his life.

He said Graner, whom he described as the "primary torturer," jumped on his injured leg and struck it with a collapsible stick.

That is the basis for one of the assault charges. On another occasion, he said, Graner handcuffed him to his cell door with his arms behind his back for eight hours.

Graner also on different occasions accompanied a U.S. soldier who urinated on him, al-Sheikh said. Another American threatened to rape him, he said.

Under defense questioning, al-Sheikh said Graner at times worked with Americans who were interrogating him at Abu Ghraib.

The defense maintains that Graner and other soldiers were ordered by military and civilian intelligence officers to soften up

detainees for questioning, and that they had no choice but to obey.

Al-Sheikh said interrogators known as "Steve" and "Mike" made it clear that he would be roughed up by Graner if he did not cooperate.

Al-Sheikh conceded that he did not see Graner and others making the Yemeni prisoner eat from the toilet, but he said it was clear that was happening from what he heard.

Another video-taped deposition from Iraq was expected before prosecutors wrapped up their case Tuesday afternoon. The defense would then start with its witnesses.

Witness: CIA and SEALs beat Baghdad detainees

BY SETH HETTNER

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A former Navy SEAL says he saw fellow SEALs and CIA officials kick, choke and eye-gouge detainees at a U.S. military base in Iraq.

The former SEAL testified at a military hearing Monday that he saw "interrogation by means of abuse" take place at Camp Jenny Pozzi, the SEAL base at Baghdad International Airport. He said a prisoner under interrogation by the CIA was abused in October 2003 by two or three SEALs. On another occasion a month later, the witness said he watched as SEALs punched, choked and poked their fingers in the eye of Iraqi Mandeel al-Jamadi, who also was punched by a CIA official when he didn't answer questions.

Al-Jamadi, a suspect in the bombing of a Red Cross facility in Iraq, died a few hours after he was captured during a joint CIA-Special operations mission in November 2003.

He died while being interrogated by CIA personnel in the shower room of the Abu Ghraib prison.

The former SEAL, who was not identified, was the government's main witness at Monday's Article 32 hearing.

The hearing, the military equivalent of a civilian grand jury, was for a Navy SEAL lieutenant who is accused of assault, maltreatment and conduct unbecoming an officer for his handling of detainees, including al-Jamadi.

A Navy officer hearing the evidence will make a recommendation whether the lieutenant, who was not identified, should face a court-martial.

Marines pause for prayer



JOSEPH GORDONO/Stars and Stripes

Marines from Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines pause for an impromptu religious service Monday morning at their small outpost near Hadithah, Iraq. The company, known as "Suicide Charley," is the only unit in the Marine Corps allowed to post two guidons, a tradition dating back to its part in the Battle of Guadalcanal.

Marine killed after attack

BY ZEKE MINAYA

Los Angeles Times

A 19-year-old Marine from Modesto, Calif., who was scheduled for a second tour of duty in Iraq, shot two police officers — one fatally — before being gunned down hours later as he rushed at police, authorities said Monday.

Andrew Raya had told his family that after a seven-month stint in Iraq he didn't want to go back, authorities said.

"There are many possibilities in this case," said Jason Woodman, spokesman for the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department.

"We haven't narrowed it down to one motive," Woodman added. Raya was on leave, visiting his family in Modesto.

He returned to Camp Pendleton on Saturday, but told a friend he was leaving the barracks to get something to eat and didn't return, Woodman said.

About 8 p.m. Sunday, Raya ap-

peared in the parking lot of a liquor store in Ceres, Calif., a town just south of Modesto, and fired a shot from an assault rifle, Woodman said.

Then Raya went into the store and asked that police be called, Woodman said.

Ceres Police Officer Sam Ryno, who arrived first, shot shot several times in the lower body and was critically wounded, authorities said.

Sgt. Howard Stevenson was shot in the torso and died at the scene, authorities said.

Raya ran to a nearby neighborhood, which authorities surrounded, drawing the Marine out from behind a home three hours later, Woodman said.

Raya charged officers, reaching into his clothes as if for a gun when he was fatally shot by officers, Woodman said.

Stevenson was the first Ceres police officer killed in the line of duty.

"This is a big shock to the community," Woodman said.

Former Gitmo translator guilty of lying

BY DENISE LAVOIE

The Associated Press

BOSTON — A former Arabic translator who took classified documents from the prison camp at Guantanamo Naval Base pleaded guilty to federal charges in a deal that will set him free within two months.

Ahmed Fathy Mehalba, 32, an Egyptian-born U.S. citizen and civilian translator at the base in Cuba, was arrested at Logan International Airport in September 2003 after returning from a trip to Egypt.

Customs agents found 132 compact discs in his luggage, including one that contained hundreds of documents labeled "SECRET" or "SECRET/NOFORN," meaning no foreign government was allowed to look at them.

He pleaded guilty Monday to one count of unauthorized possession of classified materials and two counts of lying to federal investigators.

Under federal sentencing guidelines, Mehalba would have faced between 37 and 46 months in prison. Prosecutors agreed to a lower sentence because Mehalba has no criminal record, accepted responsi-

bility for his actions and had "significantly reduced mental capacity" when he committed the crimes.

Joseph Savage, one of Mehalba's lawyers, has said his client has been treated for bipolar disorder, depression and attention deficit disorder.

He was one of four men swept up in an espionage investigation at the Navy base. Some or all charges were dropped against the other three men, who included a Muslim chaplain, another interpreter and an Army Reserve colonel.

U.S. Attorney Michael Sullivan called the plea "a proper and fair result." These charges were brought to redress serious breaches in security and Mr. Mehalba's failure when first interviewed to honestly acknowledge them.

Mehalba initially told investigators that the discs contained only music and videos, then later said he had no idea how the classified documents got on the discs.

His lawyers had argued that he was taking materials with him to work on translating them.

With credit for time served since his arrest, Mehalba is expected to be freed in two months, shortly after his sentencing March 9.

Yellow support ribbons split blue and red states

BY JOE GAROFOLI
San Francisco Chronicle

Bob Means put a yellow "Support Our Troops" ribbon magnet on the back of his Ford pickup, then handed a dozen others out to friends without knowing he was making a political statement.

"I wanted to show my support for the troops," said the 57-year-old retired Oakland, Calif., firefighter and Vietnam-era Army veteran, who now lives in Martinez, Calif. "Yes, I'm pro-military and pro-Bush, but that's not why I have it on there. Our troops are over there to do a job — one that some of them would probably not choose to do — but nevertheless, they're keeping us safe."

Yet as the latest trend in bumper wear moves inexorably from its origins in the South, its cultural meaning is being debated in ways that its creators couldn't have imagined when they started turning out the magnets at the height of the Iraq war's popularity nearly two years ago.

The North Carolinians who thought up the rubbery, 8-inch-high magnets saw them just the same way. Means does — as a way to support the troops. Instead, they're becoming part of the blue-red cultural divide.

If you've got one on your car, many people now think you support the Bush administration's policy in Iraq. There have been reports of people stealing yellow-ribbon magnets from cars in other parts of the country, symbolic vandalism akin to tearing down a political opponent's yard sign.

In November, one of the nation's largest antiwar organizations began selling a response ribbon. The similar-looking yellow magnet reads, "Bring the Troops Home Now." Some sellers of the "Support Our Troops" ribbons say they'd be leery of carrying it, fearing it comes with political connotations they don't see in the "Support" ribbons.

L.A. Kauffman, a New York City organizer for the antiwar organization United for Peace and Justice, thought of the "Bring the Troops Home" idea after seeing "Support" magnets everywhere on cars in relatively conservative upstate New York.

"I thought, 'We have to respond to this,' and the way to respond is to say we should bring the troops home now," Kauffman said. The first 2,500 sold out hours after being posted on the organization's Web site, unitedforpeace.org.

Kauffman attributed the sales to a post-election hunger among the antiwar crowd for something symbolic to display in response to President Bush's re-election. "After the election, people were drowning in red-state sentiment," she said.

None of this cultural reaction was the intent of Derrick Carroll, the North Carolina man who designed the ribbon.

"Its sole intent was just what it says: To support the troops, whether we're at war or not," Carroll said. "That never did enter my mind that it would be a Republican thing or a Democrat thing. There's no agenda here."



Paul and Rachel Ratliff pose with their new son, Paul Jeremiah, at their home in Pikeville, Ky., on Jan. 5. Paul was in Iraq last month when he learned that his wife had gone into premature labor. He was granted emergency leave and returned home in time to welcome his new son.

Emergency leave gets troops back home during crisis

The Associated Press

PIKEVILLE, Ky. — Marine Cpl. Paul Ratliff was in Iraq last month when he learned that his wife has gone into labor prematurely and their child was at risk of being born with underdeveloped lungs.

"My heart hit my stomach when I got the message," said Ratliff, a 26-year-old reservist whose commanders allowed him to travel to Kentucky to be with his wife.

The question of whether a soldier, sailor or Marine should be granted emergency leave is one that military officials deal with regularly.

The Red Cross sent about 200,000 emergency messages to personnel in the armed services between July 2003 and June 2004.

A birth does not qualify Marines for emergency home leave unless, as was the case for Ratliff, there are complications, said Marine spokeswoman Staff Sgt. Christina Delai. Leaves are most often granted when immediate family members die or are seriously ill or injured, she said.

"It's done on a case-by-case basis, but we do everything we possibly can to accommodate the Marine," Delai said.

The process of applying for home leave differs slightly in each military branch, but the same general rules apply: Military person-

nel qualify for up to 30 days of home leave if a parent, spouse, child or sibling dies or faces life-threatening injury or illness.

Most requests start when a family member notifies a local American Red Cross chapter. The Red Cross verifies the emergency with a doctor and sends notification to the appropriate military unit. The request then goes up the chain of command, Delai said.

In some cases, family members inform the military unit directly with details of the situation, an increasingly common and acceptable practice in command, Delai said.

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The USS San Francisco is escorted by harbor tugs as it returns to Guam in June 2004. A deadly accident last week was apparently caused when the nuclear submarine struck a natural feature on the floor of the ocean, investigators said.



Navy: Sub struck natural feature

The Associated Press

HAGATNA, Guam — A U.S. nuclear submarine that ran aground over the weekend appears to have struck a natural feature on the floor of the Pacific Ocean, a Navy spokesman said.

Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Davis said Monday that an initial investigation had turned up nothing to indicate the USS San Francisco struck anything but a large rock, land or other natural feature as it con-

ducted underwater operations about 350 miles south of Guam.

The ship "struck something very hard and did an emergency surface," Davis said.

He added there were no reports of damage to the submarine's nuclear reactor, and the vessel made its way back to its home port in Guam on Monday under its own power. The submarine's outer hull was damaged, but its inner hull remained intact.

The submarine had been headed to Australia for a port visit.

One sailor was killed and at least 23 others suffered injuries including broken bones, cuts and bruises, the Navy said. The submarine has a crew of 137.

Machinist Mate 2nd Class Joseph Allen Ashley, 24, of Akron, Ohio, died Sunday after suffering major head injuries, Davis said.

Adm. Thomas Fargo, Commander of U.S. Pacific Command based in Hawaii, said Monday a "rapid and thorough" investigation was under way.

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IN THE WORLD

Sharon, Abbas talk for first time since election

BY R. PLUSHNICK-MASTI
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called Mahmoud Abbas on Tuesday to congratulate him for winning the Palestinian presidential elections, the latest sign that the two sides are eager to restart peace efforts after years of stalemate.

Since Abbas' landslide victory on Sunday, Israeli and the Palestinians have signalled their readiness to return to the negotiating table. The election, along with the formation of a new Israeli government that includes the dovish Labor Party, have raised hopes around the world that talks might soon resume.

Sharon's phone call, confirmed by Israeli and Palestinian officials, was the first direct contact between the two leaders since the election.

Sharon "congratulated him on his personal achievement and his victory in the elections and wished him luck," said a state-

ment issued by the prime minister's office. "They agreed they would continue talking in the near future."

Earlier Tuesday, Sharon told his new Cabinet that he hoped to meet Abbas in the "near future." He told the ministers the meeting would focus on security issues, especially efforts to "halt terrorism," according to participants.

Abbas is widely considered more moderate than his predecessor, Yasser Arafat, who died on Nov. 11, 2004, in a French hospital.

Israel refused to negotiate with Arafat, accusing him of encouraging violence during the past four years of fighting between the two sides.

The last meeting between Israeli and Palestinian premiers was in August 2003, when Sharon met Abbas during his brief term as Palestinian prime minister.

Fresh from his victory, Abbas expressed hope Monday that the sides will be able to return to the negotiating table.

"We extend our hands to our

neighbors," Abbas said. "We are ready for peace, peace based on justice. We hope that their response will be positive."

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia said plans for the meeting were still in an early stage. "When the right time comes, we will go for a well-prepared meeting. We will not go just for a meeting, but for a useful one," he said.

World reaction to the election of Abbas has been positive.

In Washington, President Bush congratulated Abbas and invited the new Palestinian leader to the White House — an offer never extended to Arafat.

Bush called on him to root out terror groups and promote democracy. Couching the presidential demand with warm words Bush never used with Yasser Arafat, the president telephoned Abbas on Monday and, according to a spokesman, told him he envisioned "a day when he and president-elect Abbas and Israel's leaders could stand together and say, 'We have peace.'"

In another development, Palestinian National Security Adviser Jibril Rajoub resigned Tuesday. In a statement, he said he was giving a chance to Abbas to appoint his own adviser, leaving open the possibility that he would resume the post.



In this photo released by an Arab-based container vessel, a raft carrying tsunami survivor Ari Afzir drifts on the sea Sunday before being rescued and brought to the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Tsunami survivor picked up after 15 days in the ocean

The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — A tsunami survivor rescued after 15 days adrift in the Indian Ocean recounted Tuesday how he lived on coconuts that floated by, tearing them open with his teeth.

Indonesia, meanwhile, said it hoped to ease the bottleneck of aid flights by opening a second airport north of Sumatra island.

Also Tuesday, Indonesia's military chief extended a new cease-fire offer to rebels in Aceh province, the region hit hardest by the Dec. 26 earthquake and tsunami that killed more than 150,000 people across South Asia.

Rebels in the area welcomed the proposal made by Gen. Endriarto Surtarto during a news conference in Banda Aceh.

"We have to work together to help Aceh," Surtarto said.

The 21-year-old survivor, Ari Afzir, was picked up Sunday by a container ship after being swept out to sea by the tsunami from a beachfront construction site in Aceh. He is the third Indonesian to be rescued and brought to Malaysia.

"The earthquake lasted about 15 minutes," Ari said after the ship docked at Port Klang near the capital of Kuala Lumpur. "Then the waves came, big, big waves that slammed down hard on us."

Ari, who appeared fit despite the ordeal, said he saw four of his friends grab pieces of debris or uprooted trees, "but we drifted away from each other as the waves rolled us out further into the sea."

For a while, he lay on a 5-foot-long plank, weak and exhausted.

"My throat was burning. The sun was hot. I had cuts all over my body. The salt water was stinging. I couldn't even find my voice to call out to other survivors. Eventually they all drifted away and I was all alone," he said in an interview with The Associated Press from his hospital bed. He ended up finding a listing boat, which he stayed on for five days before spotting a large unmanned raft with a hut on it. He swam up to it and found a gallon bottle of water aboard.

Mandela funeral

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — A memorial service was planned Tuesday for former President Nelson Mandela's last son, whose death of AIDS complications last week underscored the silence still surrounding a disease that kills more than 600 a day in South Africa.

Makgatho Mandela's family refused to disclose the nature of his illness when he went into intensive care at a Johannesburg hospital late last year.

But within hours of his death, Nelson Mandela, a leading international AIDS campaigner, summoned the media to his home to disclose that his son had been infected with HIV and to appeal for more openness about the virus ravaging Africa.

Commuters protest

ROME — Scores of trains were delayed or idled Tuesday as some 200 commuters blocked a railway line in northern Italy to protest what they say are chronic delays and overcrowding, officials said.

The commuters occupied the tracks at the Vittuone station, some 19 miles west of Milan, when they saw that a train they were waiting for was too overcrowded for them to get on, news reports said.

From The Associated Press

U.S. Embassy: suspect killed was terrorist in urgent Web warning

The Associated Press

KUWAIT CITY — The gunman that police killed Monday was a terrorist that Americans had been warned about, the U.S. Embassy said, adding U.S. citizens should stay vigilant because more terrorists remain at large.

The gunman, Fawwaz Tla'iq al-Otaibi, died of his wounds after a shootout with police in a suburb of Kuwait City on Monday. Two policemen also were killed in the gun battle, which came hours after the U.S. Embassy had posted an urgent message on its Web site warning of an "individual or individuals moving about Kuwait in a black-colored small sedan [who] intend to randomly attack Westerners."

On Tuesday, the embassy's Web site said the "terrorist" shot dead in the shootout was one of those referred to in the warning, and added: "At least one suspected terrorist, known to be armed and dangerous, remains at large."

The "two terrorists involved in the shooting may have been part of a larger group," the Web site

said. "U.S. citizens should exercise caution, maintain a low profile, and remain aware of their surroundings."

Kuwait's interior minister, Sheikh Nawwaf Al Ahmed Al Sabah, said Tuesday none of the others involved in the gunbattle had been arrested. He declined to tell reporters anything about al-Otaibi's motives or affiliation until the police had finished their investigation.

However, two lawmakers who discussed the incident with the minister in a parliamentary committee, Nawaf al-Sabah and Mohammed al-Sagor, said afterward it was a "terrorist" matter.

The incident came about 10 days after Kuwait upgraded its domestic security measures, deploying armed military and police vehicles at street junctions and outside hotels, embassies and oil facilities.

In its statements on Monday's gunbattle, the Interior Ministry did not say what al-Otaibi was wanted for.

The interior minister said that Kuwait has received many security threats recently.

Report: World's big cities vulnerable to major losses

The Associated Press

BERLIN — Tokyo, San Francisco and Los Angeles lead a world list of urban areas that could suffer catastrophic losses in lives and property from earthquakes, flooding, tsunamis or terrorism, the world's largest reinsurance company said in a report Tuesday.

Munich Re governs governments and urban planners to take disaster risks more fully into account when approving sites for development, and to take preventive measures.

Stefan Heyd, the company's head of corporate underwriting, said such "megacities" brought a new dimension of risk to the insurance business. "Megacities are exposed to all the classic risks, but the exposure and vulnerability are disproportionate," Heyd said in a statement accompanying the report.

Munich Re gave Tokyo the top rating on its list of vulnerable megacities, saying it combined huge population with vulnerability to volcanic eruption, earthquakes, tropical storms, tsunamis and flooding. With a risk index of 710, Tokyo was far ahead of No. 2, the San Francisco Bay area, which rated 167, mainly due to Tokyo's high risk of multiple disasters, its huge population and roughly 40 percent share of the country's economy.

Europeans lament lack of winter

BY WILLIAM J. KOLE
The Associated Press

VIENNA, Austria — Bears in Slovakia are awakening early from hibernation. So are barmaids in Bavaria, unseasonably busy in outdoor beer gardens. Bushes are blooming in Austria, and skiers at snowless Bosnian resorts are chilling out in hotel pools.

Forgoing a White Christmas was one thing, but the utter absence of snow for weeks on end has many Europeans pining for what seems — so far, anyway — like The Winter That Wasn't.

"Hope springs eternal," Austria's Kleine Zeitung newspaper headlined Tuesday over a photo of a lone snowflake.

The country's alpine ski slopes have plenty of white stuff, but Vienna and much of eastern Austria haven't had more than a dusting since early December.

Although temperatures have been dropping to near freezing overnight, warm air pumped up from the Azores has produced a string of sunny, balmy days in the low 50s across much of the continent.

Belgium had its warmest Jan. 10 on record Monday, when the mercury peaked at 57.2 degrees in Brussels, breaking the previous mark of 54 set in 1993. Scores of people took to their terraces to soak up the sun, and others



Todd Lodwick from the United States competes Sunday in the ski jump section at the nordic combined World Cup event in Seefeld, Austria. Austria's ski slopes may have plenty of snow, but parts of the country haven't had more than a dusting since early December.

AP

strolled along North Sea beaches.

It was even warmer — a touch under 61 degrees — in the southern Czech city of Ceske Budejovice on Saturday, the balmiest Jan. 8 recorded in 230 years.

But while the springlike weather was fine for humans, it was bad for brown bears in parts of the Czech Republic and neighboring Slovakia, some of which awoke from hibernation as grumpy as anyone roused early from a deep sleep. Naturalists warned that the testy animals

were unlikely to fall back asleep and could be dangerous to people later in the season.

Birds also seemed to have been tricked into thinking spring has sprung.

One species that usually doesn't start singing until late February already was heard in the eastern Beskydy Mountains, and flamingos at a zoo in Jihlava, 75 miles southeast of Prague, were building nests — something they normally don't do until April.

The unseasonable warmth

made the Czech Republic's Elbe River seem extra cold to 70 hardy swimmers who took their annual winter plunge last weekend. They said they prefer more frigid air temperatures, which make the river seem more comfortable by comparison.

Although most alpine ski centers had plenty of snow, poor conditions prompted World Cup organizers to cancel some events last weekend in southern Germany, where Bavaria's famed beer gardens opened for scores of thirsty visitors.

Storms in the north

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — More than 150,000 Swedes were without power Tuesday and police said another person was reported killed in fierce storms that struck northern Europe over the weekend, bringing the death toll to 17.

In southern Sweden, seven people were reported killed in the weekend storm. Police said Tuesday that an eighth person was found dead and another remained missing.

Two British men swept away in northern rivers have been missing since Saturday and there has been no word about their fate, British authorities said.

Swedish utilities Sydskraft AB and Vattenfall AB said 150,000 households were still without electricity, and another 180,000 without phone service.

Another 10,000 homes in northeastern England were without running water Tuesday because of the weekend storms that caused flooding.

Meanwhile, police warned thousands of homeowners against returning to flood-damaged properties in the northwestern city of Carlisle because of contaminated water and damaged electrical cabling.

In Russia, thousands were without power in the Pskov region, Inter-Tass reported.

From The Associated Press

Message for our men and women in uniform...

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IN THE STATES

Bush picks judge to lead Homeland Security

BY JOHN SOLOMON

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush on Tuesday chose federal appeals court judge Michael Chertoff to be his new Homeland Security chief, turning to a former federal prosecutor who helped craft the early war on terror strategy.

"Mike has shown a deep commitment to the cause of justice and an unwavering determination to protect the American people," Bush said. "Mike has also been a key leader in the war on terror."

Chertoff headed the Justice Department's criminal division from 2001 to 2003, where he played a central role in the nation's legal response to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, before the president named him to the appeals court position in New Jersey.

Chertoff, a federal appellate judge with the 3rd U.S. Court of Appeals in Philadelphia, would replace Tom Ridge, the department's first chief.

"He leaves some very deep shoes to fill," Chertoff said.

"I don't pretend to know him well. I know him by reputation," Ridge said of Chertoff.

"He's got great intellect, great energy. He has been an extremely successful lawyer both in the public private and sector."

Chertoff, who rounds out Bush's second-term Cabinet, is actually the president's second pick



Chertoff

for the job. Former New York City police chief Bernard Kerik withdrew as nominee last month, citing immigration problems with a family housekeeper.

Bush said that Chertoff has "been confirmed by the Senate three times," signaling that he should have no problem surmounting the advice and consent process.

Chertoff, whose appeal court nomination sailed through Congress, won immediate support on Capitol Hill, where even Democrats applauded the choice.

"Judge Mike Chertoff has the resume to be an excellent Homeland Security Secretary, given his law enforcement background and understanding of New York's and America's neglected homeland security needs," said Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y.

Chertoff and his wife, Meryl,

each donated \$1,000 to Bush's first presidential campaign.

Chertoff, whose resume includes stints as a federal prosecutor in New Jersey and the Senate Republicans' chief counsel for the Clinton-era Whitewater investigation, was one of the administration's key figures in the war on terror.

He took the lead in 2003 in successfully arguing the government's case in a potentially precedent-setting appeal involving terrorism suspect Zacarias Moussawi, the lone man charged as a conspirator in the Sept. 11 attacks and playing a significant role in development of the U.S. Patriot Act to combat terrorist attacks.

As the U.S. attorney for New Jersey from 1990 to 1994 — named by Bush's father — Chertoff oversaw high-profile prosecutions of Jersey City Mayor Gerald

McCann, New York chief judge Sol Wachtler and the kidnappers and killers of Exxon executive Sidney Reso.

Chertoff personally handled the stock fraud trial of Eddie Antar, founder of the failed Crazy Eddie discount electronics chain.

He entered private practice in 1994 but stayed in the public spotlight.

As chief Republican counsel to the Senate Whitewater Committee during the administration of President Clinton, Chertoff played a major role in the investigation of the Clintons' Arkansas business dealings; the suicide of Vincent Foster, a Clinton aide and former law partner of Hillary Clinton; and other allegations against the Clintons.

In 2000, he worked in Trenton, N.J., as special counsel to the state Senate Judiciary Committee that investigated racial profiling in New Jersey.



LOS ANGELES TIMES/AP

A victim of a mudslide is rescued Monday in La Conchita, Calif. A huge mudslide crashed down on homes in the coastal hamlet with terrifying force Monday, killing at least four people as a Pacific storm hammered Southern California for a fourth straight day.

At scene of mudslide, 'it was like the hillside turned to liquid'

LA CONCHITA, Calif. — First came the sickening crack of splitting earth, then a sudden roar as cascading dirt and vegetation swallowed home after home.

Alerted by screams and honking horns, some in this sliver of a town found themselves racing the fast-moving flow.

"It was like the hillside turned to liquid. It came down," Ventura County Fire Department spokesman Joe Luna said.

A fourth body was located late Tuesday

morning, said fire Capt. Conrad Quintana.

Fourteen other people were injured and 20 to 27 were missing after Monday's slide, triggered by the latest in a wave of powerful storms that have saturated Southern California terrain.

Such a disaster had long ago been predicted for the community tucked between Highway 101 and a towering coastal bluff. Years ago, the cliff was found to be creeping toward the Pacific Ocean, and dozens

moved out after a 1995 slide destroyed nine homes.

Dozens of firefighters armed with shovels, listening devices and other tools searched the mounds of debris Tuesday but had not found any more survivors or bodies by midmorning.

"We were digging and searching, digging and searching all night," said Ralph Arriola, 56, of the Los Angeles County Fire Department's urban search and rescue

team. "I didn't find anyone."

Rescue crews called for quiet whenever they plunged sensitive microphones into the muck to listen for signs of life, and scanned the area with infrared sensors that can detect body heat beneath debris.

Fire officials, told that children were among the missing, advised searchers to "look for small hands and small fingers," Luna said.

— The Associated Press

Record rain pouring misery throughout Southern Calif.

BY CHRIS T. NGUYEN

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Scattered rain showers lashed waterlogged Southern California again Tuesday, hampering efforts to find survivors buried by a mudslide in a coastal community and prompting hundreds to flee a mountain town below a rain-swollen reservoir and along rising streams.

The succession of storms that have brought heavy snow to the mountains of Northern California and astonishing amounts of rain to the south was blamed for the deaths of at least 12 people.

The National Weather Service said Tuesday that downtown Los Angeles had recorded its wettest 15 consecutive days on record, with a total of 17 inches of rain falling in the period ending Monday.

The storm was forecast to taper off late Tuesday or early Wednesday and no new system is expected through the coming Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend. More snow fell in the Sierra Nevada, but the mountains were expected to get a break in the weather this weekend with rising temperatures.

In La Conchita, a small commu-

Bright side of clouds: Drought relief

DENVER — Storms that have wreaked havoc from California to Colorado could mean relief for areas of the West that have suffered through five years of crippling drought.

"Since October, significant snowpack has been piling up from the Sierra to the southern and central Rockies," Douglas LeComte, drought specialist for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, said in a statement Monday.

The snowpack water content is more than 150 percent of normal across much of the Southwest, from southern and central California into Nevada, Utah and western Arizona, LeComte said. He said more snow could help bring "significant" water flow to those parts of the West.

— The Associated Press

nity on a spit of land between the hills south of Santa Barbara and the Pacific Ocean, a massive mudslide Monday killed four people, injured 14 and left 20 to 27 unaccounted-for.

Some of those 27 may have been out of town, but firefighters were certain at least some were trapped in the 15 homes that were crushed under a pile of mud 30 feet high, said Keith Mashburn, the Ventura County Fire Department's chief investigator.

Some 20 miles away, about 350 people in Piru took shelter overnight at a school after the entire town of 2,000 residents was advised to evacuate.

"Lake Piru is filling faster than it's releasing water," said Rod Megh, division chief for the Ventura County Fire Department. "That volume of water could affect a number of residents. We'd rather be safe than sorry."

Roads all over Southern California were being closed periodically because of high water.

Last week's heavy rain and snow also produced flooding along the Ohio River that has affected communities in West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana, covering riverside roads and forcing some residents to evacuate. One person died Monday in Ohio when he drove into high water.

High court hears CIA spy contract case

BY HOPE YEN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Secret spy deals should never be litigated in court because of the danger to national security, the Supreme Court was told Tuesday, as it heard arguments in a case involving former Cold War spies who say the CIA backed out of a pledge of lifetime support.

The Supreme Court is considering whether the former Eastern bloc diplomat and his wife may sue the CIA for allegedly breaking a promise to provide them financial security.

"There's something inherent about an espionage relationship that you understand you have no protected status under the law," said acting Solicitor General Paul Clement. But David Burnham, who represents the couple, said the executive branch should not have the power to renege on spy contracts without some judicial review.

Justices to weigh whether ex-agents can sue agency for allegedly breaking income deal

"This is not about the protection of state secrets, but about the limits of executive power," he said.

Several justices appeared hesitant to have federal courts referee spy deals, noting that not only spies but CIA officials accept that they might be backstabbed when making secret deals.

At issue is whether a 130-year-old Supreme Court ruling automatically bars federal courts from hearing lawsuits over alleged spy contracts, which the CIA says are secret deals that may never be acknowledged.

The administration of President Bush argues that since the CIA was created in 1947, courts have dismissed spy lawsuits

outright on the grounds that any disclosure could threaten security and undermine CIA recruitment efforts.

The couple, who are identified by the aliases John and Jane Doe, counter that the executive branch should not have the power to renege on spy contracts without some judicial review. Sensitive information could be kept secret by sealing records or other methods, they say.

The San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed, ruling the couple had a right to obtain documents and other information from the CIA to build a trial case. It said recent rulings have allowed litigation to proceed in cases involving questions of national security if the government doesn't show a clear risk.

The case involves a former high-ranking diplomat and his wife who wanted to defect from their Eastern bloc country but were pressured by U.S. authorities to instead spy for the United States, according to the lawsuit. In exchange, the CIA promised to help them later defect as well as provide lifetime security.

When their spying was over in 1987, the CIA helped them resettle in Seattle with new identities, benefits and a bank job for the husband, the suit says. They initially received a \$27,000 yearly stipend and became U.S. citizens.

The CIA stopped the subsidy when John Doe's salary from the bank hit \$27,000, but the two were promised the agency would "always be there." However, the couple claims, when Doe lost his job in 1997, the CIA refused to reinstate the stipend, saying the couple had received enough pay for their spy services.

Rather saves job, but reputation takes a hit

BY DAVID BAUDER

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — As his anchor career nears its end in March, Dan Rather's reputation as a hard-charging news reporter took some damaging blows from the independent panel that probed CBS's discredited story on President Bush's National Guard service.

Three CBS News executives and the producer of last September's "60 Minutes Wednesday" report were fired Monday by CBS chief Leslie Moonves for rushing the story to air and then blindingly defending it.

Rather was portrayed by the panel — retired Associated Press chief executive officer Louis D. Boccia and former GOP Attorney General Dick Thornburgh — as "pushed to the limit" by coverage of the Republican National Convention and Hurricane Frances as final reporting on the story was done.

"He's had a distinguished television news career, he's one of the largest figures in this industry and this event doesn't erase the other things that he has accomplished," Boccia said on CBS' "The Early Show."

The veteran anchorman did not appear to have participated in any of the vetting sessions or even seen the story before it aired, Boccia and Thornburgh found.

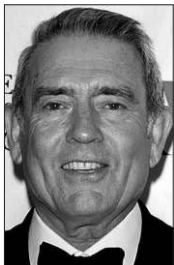
"The panel has found that his unwillingness to consider that CBS News and his colleague were in the wrong was a mistake, and that the broadcast would have benefited from a more direct involvement on Rather's part," Moonves said in a statement.

Given Rather's voluntary retirement as anchor, a decision that Rather said was unrelated to the National Guard story, Moonves said he decided not to discipline him.

Rather will move then to "60 Minutes," where Moonves said he will have "more time to concentrate on his reporting."

Rather did not anchor the "CBS Evening News" on Monday, after traveling back from Thailand over the weekend. An aide said he was reading the report and did not have an immediate comment.

It had to have been a particularly painful moment for a man who regards as one of his proudest legacies that he remained a reporter as well as a newscaster in a quarter-century at the anchor desk.



Dan Rather

He frequently traveled to the sites of major stories, including tsunami-devastated Asia.

Fired were Mary Mapes, the story's producer, Josh Howard, executive producer of "60 Minutes Wednesday"; Howard's top deputy, Mary Murphy; and CBS News senior vice president Betsy West.

Boccia and Thornburgh's 224-page report catalogued a long series of missteps, essentially saying the report was aired too soon under competitive pressure without being thoroughly checked out. Four months after the report was aired, the panel still couldn't say conclusively whether memos allegedly disparaging Bush's service were real or fake.

"If these experienced vetters knew everything that we know about the circumstances, the authentication, they wouldn't have let the program go on the air," Boccia said in the CBS interview Tuesday.

Moussaoui takes pretrial appeal to Supreme court

BY LARRY MARGASAK

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Lawyers for Zacarias Moussaoui petitioned the Supreme Court on Monday, challenging the government's right to put the terrorism suspect on trial while the defense had no access to potentially favorable al-Qaida witnesses.

The written brief questioned whether Moussaoui's constitutional rights would be violated if the defense was forced to rely on government-prepared summaries of interrogation statements from three al-Qaida captives.

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., has approved use of the summaries after the government argued that more direct access to al-Qaida leaders or even their classified interrogation statements — would jeopardize national security.

The lawyers said it was unconstitutional to force Moussaoui to rely on "summaries of classified documents containing information from unnamed, unsworn government agents purporting to report unsworn, incomplete, non-verbal accounts" of witness statements.

Moussaoui, a French citizen, was indicted in December 2001, and remains the only U.S. defendant charged in an al-Qaida conspiracy that includes the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. The defendant has acknowledged his loyalty to Osama bin Laden but denies he was to have any role in the 2001 airplane hijackings.

The lawyers appealed a ruling from the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which would allow Moussaoui access to the summaries but still refuse direct access to the al-Qaida witnesses. The ruling also allows prosecutors to seek the death penalty.

Most of the written brief was not immediately made public because it includes classified information. However, an unclassified portion of the brief — obtained by The Associated Press — raised questions of whether Moussaoui would be denied his right to a fair trial under three sections of the U.S. Constitution.

Supreme Court spokeswoman Kathy Arberg said an unclassified version of the brief would be available in about a week.

The lawyers said Moussaoui was denied rights under the Sixth Amendment, which allows defendants to compel testimony in their favor; the Fifth Amendment guarantee that defendants should not be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law; and the Eighth Amendment, banning cruel and unusual punishment.

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Man pleads guilty to Bush threat

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — A man pleaded guilty Monday in federal court to threatening to kill President Bush.

Darrel D. Alford, 56, admitted he threatened on Aug. 4 to fly a bomb-laden model airplane into an arena or stadium where Bush would be speaking. He faces up to five years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine of up to \$250,000.

It was not clear when or where Alford planned to harm Bush, said Don Ledford, a spokesman for the U.S. attorney's office.

Stewart book ban lifted

BOLTON, Miss. — A library board in southern Mississippi has lifted its ban of Jon Stewart's best-selling "America (The Book)" after local residents spoke up in support of it.

The Jackson County Regional Library System board of trustees had voted last month to ban the book in eight public libraries because they objected to an image of the faces of the U.S. Supreme Court justices superimposed on nine naked bodies.

They rescinded the ban Monday on a 5-2 vote.

From The Associated Press

OPINION

Keeping the wolves at bay after the tsunami

BY JANICE SHAW CROUSE

With thousands of children left orphaned by the South Asia tsunami, authorities are concerned for children's safety in a region where trafficking networks are entrenched and where markets for forced labor and sexual slavery thrive. There is fear that trafficking rings might be preying on children left vulnerable in the social chaos produced by the tragedy.

"For exploiters," said Lisa Thompson, who heads up anti-trafficking efforts for The Salvation Army, "any situation that leaves children homeless and orphaned is like the scent of a wounded animal to a wolf." Dr. Laura Lederer, who pioneered research on trafficking, echoed the same fears: "Places where there is political or economic instability, civil war or natural disaster are most likely to be targeted by traffickers."

Ambassador John Miller, who heads up the State Department's Trafficking in Persons office, summed up his concerns this way: "Trafficking of children has been going on in this region and elsewhere long before the tsunami. While cases of child trafficking, resulting from the tsunami have yet to be confirmed, I believe wherever there is chaos, the opportunities for traffickers increase."

Dr. Donna Hughes, a University of Rhode Island professor and leading expert on trafficking, agrees: "Predators are always looking for ways to prey on the vulnerable, so it shouldn't surprise us that a disaster that creates victims and chaos has become a prime hunting ground for them. Still, we should remember that on many of these beaches, pe-

dophiles and sexual predators abuse and exploit boys, girls and women every day of the year."

The affected nations are establishing measures to protect orphaned children. In the Aceh region of Indonesia where 35,000 children have lost at least one parent, police have been put on alert against exploitation of the children and special guards have been posted in refugee camps. Last year, Indonesia made significant progress in combating trafficking with 125 reported trafficking-related investigations, 67 prosecutions and 27 convictions. In addition, crisis centers were built and nongovernmental organizations began providing services to victims.

With such progress, Indonesia has laid a foundation for countering post-tsunami criminal activity and, since the tragedy, they have barred anyone from taking orphans out of the country until all are registered. Such moves will deter the traffickers, but officials fear that the proximity of Indonesia's ports already known as transit points for criminal networks may have enabled gangs to ship children out before officials could mobilize protective efforts.

India, too, is concerned about the exploitation of children orphaned by the tragedy. The government has accounted for all the children in the hardest-hit state, Tamil Nadu, and the government is building an orphanage and opening a bank account for each of the orphans. Tamil Nadu initiated action last year against 90 possible traffickers and 550 employers for child-labor infractions of children believed to be trafficking victims. Neither Thailand nor Sri Lanka has been as aggressive, but they are working



with the hospitals to protect children and they already have stringent adoption policies.

In response to questions about what can be done to help in the affected nations, Ambassador Miller said, "Right now we have contacted [nongovernment organizations], our embassies and foreign governments with steps to take to reduce trafficking opportunities, e.g., registration of children in refugee camps, education of camp workers, warnings to children in camps, increased security at airports of adults accompanied by children, etc. We are in constant communication with charitable groups and interna-

tional organizations on the ground to help us identify child trafficking situations and, pursuant to President Bush's anti-trafficking in persons initiative, to help us set up or expand anti-child-trafficking programs."

Certainly the threat to children at this critical time should provide added impetus for the affected nations to launch concerted efforts against pedophiles, because any abuse and exploitation against "the most innocent and vulnerable" is, in the words of President Bush, "a special kind of evil."

Janice Shaw Crouse heads the anti-trafficking efforts for Concerned Women for America, a Washington-based organization that promotes pro-life, pro-marriage and pro-family policies.

No one should warm to idea that SUVs are to blame

BY JAMES K. GLASSMAN

Scraps Howard

The tsunami the day after Christmas has so far killed more than 150,000 in South Asia and East Africa.

It was a terrible tragedy to which the world is responding quickly and generously. But, in some quarters, the tsunami offers an irresistible opportunity for exploitation — and not just by kidnappers of orphans to use as prostitutes.

Unscrupulous activists, who have so far been unable to enact a scheme for mandatory reductions in energy under the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, are telling whoever will listen, "See, we told you so!"

"The argument goes roughly like this," said an editorial in the Chicago Tribune. Greenhouse gases, largely from the United States and industrialized nations, have fueled a global warming trend that is melting the ice caps and contributing to a rise in sea levels that might have caused or aggravated the South Asia disaster."

In a typical example, the Tribune cited Tony Juniper of Friends of the Earth in Britain saying, "Here again are yet more events in the real world that are consistent with climate change predictions."

Tom Toles, editorial cartoonist of The Washington Post, depicted a couple of Asians on a devastated island, looking at a newspaper with the headline, "CO2 Emissions." One comments, "Does it say what the West will be sending?" The other replies, "A six-foot increase in sea level."

And Voice of America broadcast an interview with Naomi Oreskes of the University of California, who claimed that the tsunami "highlights the need to take action on global warming." All of us are to blame, said Oreskes — "every single one of us who drives a car, heats our house, flies an airplane ... anybody who basically lives in the modern world is involved in this activity."

Much of this shameful nonsense is simply the result of people being swept away by their own rhetoric — or their desire to raise money for their organizations. But at its root are two profoundly incorrect sentiments:

First is solipsism: We humans are the most powerful force on Earth. How can there be a disaster if we didn't cause it?

Second is naturism: If we humans didn't mess with Mother Nature, everything would be perfectly peachy.

To the contrary. Research indicates, more and more, that recent warming at the surface of Earth is mainly influenced by cyclical changes at the surface of the sun, whereas, as far as we can tell, no one is driving an SUV.

As for the tsunami itself: It was started by a huge earthquake, the violent, unpredictable handwork of Nature or, if you prefer, God.

But didn't global warming raise sea levels

to start with, making the tsunami more devastating? No sea levels in the northeastern Indian Ocean have been going down, not up.

But assume the worst — a global rise of 4 to 8 inches over the past century, as claimed by a United Nations group. Even an increase of an inch a decade is minimal, compared with a Dec. 26 tidal wave estimated at 30 to 40 feet high. And it could have been worse. The wave unleashed by the eruption of the volcano Krakatoa [on the Indonesian island of Rakata] in 1883 reached 100 feet or more.

The truth is that terrible, terrible things happen that can't be blamed on George W. Bush or any other human. The only way to mitigate them is through wealth and technological progress. As Glenn Reynolds wrote recently on TechCentralStation.com: "The best protection against catastrophes is a society that is rich enough, and diverse enough, to be well-prepared for all sorts of contingencies. Which means that economic growth,

and the freedom that produces it, may be the best guarantor of safety for all."

A rich society has the dikes to hold back the sea, the advanced construction to keep buildings from collapsing, the communications systems to warn of disasters, the roads to help people escape and the hospitals to treat the injured — not to mention the imagination and flexibility to respond to the unforeseen.

If there is any way at all to reduce the horrifying effects of a natural disaster like the one that just visited the Indian Ocean, it's to reduce poverty in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the rest of the developing world — an aim that, by the way, would be beneficial even if there's never another tsunami.

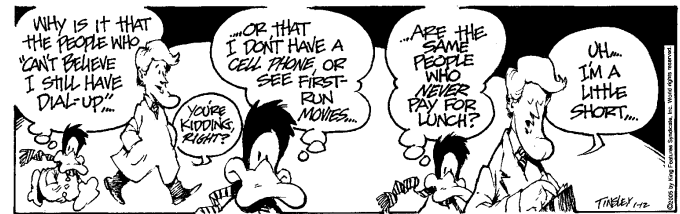
The proper project for the next century is fighting poverty and encouraging economic growth — not exploiting fears and imposing a windmill-powered, no-growth society.

The proper project for the next century is fighting poverty and encouraging economic growth — not exploiting fears and imposing a windmill-powered, no-growth society.

James K. Glassman is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and host of TechCentralStation.com.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Power outage puts arctic town in deep freeze

BY MARY PEMBERTON

THE Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — A power outage has forced residents of an Alaskan village on the Arctic Ocean to scurry from one building to another in search of warmth in subzero conditions, while state officials scramble to get repair crews to the isolated area.

"If hell can freeze over, this is

it, and it has," said Arthur Smith in a telephone interview from Kaktovik, which is home to about 300 people in the state's northeast corner, more than 200 miles beyond the Arctic Circle.

Smith crawled out of two down sleeping bags to answer the phone Monday at the local hotel where he's the caretaker.

The village's power generating plant quit at about 5 p.m. Sunday during a blizzard in which 70

mph winds drove temperatures to 20 below zero Fahrenheit — 60 below zero F counting the wind chill. By Monday afternoon temperatures had risen — barely — to 10 below zero F with a wind chill of 50 below F, according to the National Weather Service.

Most residents were coping by wearing winter gear indoors, and using propane and wood stoves and kerosene heaters. Some residents sought shelter at the village

school, which had its own source of power. Then that, too, failed Sunday night.

Eight or nine families from the school moved to a village equipment maintenance building that still has power. But its generators depend on fuel tanks that are running low, authorities said.

An Alaska Air National Guard C-130 plane loaded with equipment and repair technicians left Anchorage for Kaktovik on Mon-

day. But in Barrow, about 325 miles west of Kaktovik, the plane was delayed by a severe storm. Officials planned to try again Tuesday morning.

Jim Butchart, with the state Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, said the situation is not life-threatening. But he said concerns are increasing that if power can't be restored soon, the village people could freeze, causing extensive damage.

Some Dems urge Inauguration Day economic boycott

BY ADRIENNE SCHWISOW

The Associated Press

DETROIT — David Livingstone says the idea behind the economic boycott he's organizing is simple: If people don't show up at work or buy things, companies lose money. As he sees it, that's money the Bush administration can't tax, and can't use to run the war in Iraq, protect polluters or chip away at the Constitution.

So the Detroit Democrat and a handful of other anti-Bush groups across the country are urging others of like mind to withhold their cash and labor on Inauguration Day — from all businesses. They don't think they'll inflict a huge economic pain, but they do want to make a point.

"I view the inauguration of Bush as a black Thursday for this country," Livingstone says. "We've tried marching in the streets to stop the war, we tried writing letters, we tried initiatives on the Web, but Bush doesn't listen. It seems to us the only thing Bush and the Republicans will listen to is money."

Livingstone, a 41-year-old writer, hopes to be in Washington for the Jan. 20 festivities, which for him means protests, black armbands and backs turned to the parade route. He's vowed not to buy gas, food or use his credit card on a second day. Bush wants the GOP, big oil, big banking, big box stores and any other "bigs" to know they can't push him around or ignore him — at least not on Jan. 20.

Bush "is proud that we live in a society where people are free to peacefully express their opinions," White House spokesman Jim Murrell says.

Other groups nationwide, many loosely connected through the Internet, have put out calls similar to Livingstone's. Jesse Gordon, 44, of Cambridge, Mass., spreads the word through his Web site, Not One Damn Dime! "I think Bush should acknowledge the boycott. If we're effective, he'll know about it, and he should acknowledge it," Gordon says.

In New Orleans, Buddy Spell says his January 20th Committee eagerly endorses the idea of an economic boycott. He remains primarily concerned with organizing a jazz funeral procession through the downtown to mourn a second day Bush term and what he calls the death of democracy. But he says a boycott is worth pursuing, in part because it can help unite disparate anti-Bush forces.

The groups hope to see several million people eating brown-bag lunches and dinners on Inauguration Day. If peo-



David Livingstone, who is promoting an economic boycott on January 20 during the presidential inauguration, shows the home page to his Web site Saturday in Detroit.

ple don't want to boycott all business, the groups suggest buying from just those that support Democrats. The protesters say they'll measure success not in economic terms, but by whether people know about the boycott and if it sparks future activism. And if there's by chance a blip in the GDP, that would be a bonus.

"I can't imagine it would have any impact whatsoever," says David J. Vogel, professor of business ethics at the University of California at Berkeley. "Even if everyone didn't buy on that day, they'd make up for it the next day."

Historian Lawrence Glickman says boycotts rarely accomplish any substantial economic goal. "There's this appeal about boycotts, anyone can take part in them, and you can use your pocketbook to express your dissatisfaction," says Glickman, who studies labor and consumer activism at the University of Southern California in Columbia. "It's a way of feeling like we're participating in something bigger than ourselves."

Perchlorate debate fueled by new report

BY ERICA WERNER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The debate about perchlorate contamination in drinking water is getting more heated as environmentalists object to a report claiming the widespread toxin is far less dangerous than was thought.

A National Academy of Sciences panel said Monday that perchlorate, a toxic chemical used in rocket fuel and explosives, is safe for consumption at levels 20 times the standard being considered by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The study is expected to influence the EPA as it develops its first national standard for perchlorate in drinking water. But environmentalists contended such a high standard could endanger children's health while letting defense contractors off the hook for cleanup costs.

"Wherever this standard is applied, most perchlorate contamination sites will be wiped off the map," said Lenny Siegel, director of the Center for Public

Environmental Oversight in Mountain View, Calif. "Millions of children and pregnant women will continue to be guinea pigs in the great perchlorate exposure experiment."

The study comes after years of disagreement over how dangerous it is for people to drink water

There has been disagreement for years over how dangerous it is for people to drink water tainted with perchlorate.

tainted with perchlorate, a pervasive leftover of Cold War defense manufacturing that has been found in drinking water in 35 states. The chemical, which leaches easily into groundwater from defense and manufacturing sites, can inhibit thyroid function and is considered particularly dangerous to children.

While the chemical also is found in nature, the panel said its presence in the environment primarily comes from the manufacture and use of rocket fuels as well as explosives and fireworks.

The NAS panel recommended a level for safe human consumption of approximately 20 parts per billion in drinking water. Two years ago, the EPA issued a preliminary recommendation of 1 part per billion.

The academy study was ordered by the Bush administration in 2003 to review the stricter standard the EPA had proposed in 2002. The Pentagon had criticized that standard as too stringent.

The Natural Resources Defense Council contended that documents obtained under Freedom of Information Act requests showed the Pentagon and the White House had sought to influence the scope of the academy's study in order to get a weaker standard.

Ariz. botulism supplier ordered to stop shipments

BY CATHERINE WILSON

The Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — A federal judge ordered an Arizona company to stop distributing raw botulism bacteria in place of the wrinkle treatment Botox and to recall any of roughly 3,000 vials that may still be in circulation.

The potent bacteria marketed by Tucson, Arizona-based Toxin Research International to doctors since 2003 came from the same California supplier whose product is blamed for paralyzing four people injected at a Florida clinic.

Toxin Research used misleading and deceptive practices that are "likely to result in tragic consequences to the unsuspecting consumer," U.S. District Judge James Cohn said on Monday.

List Biological Laboratories, a Campbell, Calif.-based maker of bulk reagents, allegedly prepared a low-dose batch of botulism, something equivalent to the injectable cosmetic drug, and sold it to Toxin Research for about \$30,000.

Bach McComb, who lost his medical license last year, first obtained botulism from Toxin Research and then direct

from List in a strength 20,000 times higher. Witnesses say McComb injected the List botulism that paralyzed himself and three others in late November. All four are still being treated.

The judge granted the government's request for an injunction to shut down Toxin Research and its botulism sales to doctors after hearing from the company's founder, Chad Livdahl, and from the operator of an affiliated company.

Livdahl, a microbiologist and owner of the company, testified repeatedly that his sales were intended for research only and not for human use in place of Botox.

Wine, liquor sales closing in on beer market

BY GREG EDWARDS

Dow Jones Newswires

ST. LOUIS — If you sometimes find yourself ordering a glass of wine or a mixed drink when you need to order a beer, you're not alone.

Wines and distilled spirits continue to gain a bigger share of the alcoholic beverage market, at the expense of the beer industry.

It's a trend that has been going on since the late 1990s and contin-

ued in 2004. Analysts who follow the alcoholic beverage industry don't see it stopping anytime soon.

"We believe there is an overall image crisis with beer," Smith Barney Clifton analyst Bonnie Herzog said.

As baby boomers age, they are more willing to buy wine and spirits instead of beer. And the wine and spirit companies are successfully targeting younger drinkers

with advertising and promotions.

"Our wholesaler contacts have told us through a survey we conducted recently that beer has lost its 'sexiness' and appeal to young consumers," Herzog said. "We continue to believe the road ahead is a long one for the beer industry."

Beer remains, by far, the most popular alcoholic beverage in the United States. But its share of the alcohol market has slipped.

Beer Market's Insights, a trade publication, estimates that beer accounted for 59.5 percent of the absolute alcohol content sold in its peak year, 1995. That had fallen to 56.7 percent in 2003.

The spirits industry began its big push in 1999, when it had 28.6 percent of the market. In 2003, its share had risen to 29.7 percent. Wine went from 12.6 percent to 13.6 percent.

So what are the brewers doing

about it? For one thing, they are spending more money on promotions, including what they call on-premise spending. That means mostly bars and restaurants, but also hotels, clubs, and concession stands.

And a little generational rebellion must be overcome, as well. Swartzberg said. Younger drinkers may choose wine and cocktails because their parents chose beer.

Trek to Alaska's capital a challenge for lawmakers

Remote capital

BY MATT VOLZ
The Associated Press

Juneau, the capital of Alaska, is located in the middle of the Tongass National Forest, with no roads in or out, the only way to get to the city is by sea or air.



Alaska population in 2000: 626,932

Juneau: 30,711

Source: Census Bureau

JUNEAU, Alaska — Old-timers grumble that modern conveniences are robbing Alaska of its status as the last frontier.

But trying to tell that to the state's lawmakers as they make their annual journey to the most inaccessible capital in North America.

Juneau is in the middle of the Tongass National Forest. There are no roads in or out, the only way to get here is by sea or air.

Some lawmakers have to travel more than 1,000 miles to reach Juneau — Carl Moses, who is from a district in the Aleutian Islands, flies the same distance as a New Yorker vacationing in Miami just to get to work.

On the other hand, the reward is four months in this picturesque port town of 30,000 in Alaska's southern panhandle, where the mountains drop straight into the Inside Passage and humpback whales, orcas, sea lions and bears are just a boat ride away or around the next corner.

For the hundreds of part-time politicians and staffers who leave their homes, families and jobs to take part in the annual migration, getting to Juneau can be an exercise in serendipity or frustration.

John Coghill, a Republican representative from North Pole, and his wife, Luann, drive 660 miles and through two U.S.-Canada border checkpoints every year to

reach Haines. From there, they take the 4½-hour ferry ride down the Lynn Canal to Juneau.

This year, Coghill drove along through Alaska's interior and Canada's Yukon, where the temperature dropped to 15 below zero, snowdrifts nearly covered the highway and the sun did not come up until 10 a.m.

After fueling his diesel station wagon in Destruction Bay near the Yukon's Klunne Lake, Coghill stopped frequently to take photographs and hike along a frozen stream near the Chilkat Pass.

"This is the wilderness," he said. "I enjoy the drive. I'm able to ponder things."

Flying is the better option for those who want a quicker trip, but it is not always an easy way in. With the region's quickly changing weather, powerful winds and rugged terrain, planes sometimes have difficulty landing at Juneau International Airport.

Republican Sen. John Cowdery of Anchorage said he and newly appointed Sen. Charlie Huggins had to spend a night in Sitka last week when their plane was diverted because of bad weather.

"They should have made damn sure that we got in the first time," Cowdery grouched. "It's a bad taste in your mouth to start the session."

Cowdery is among the several lawmakers who support moving the capital out of Juneau, a de-



A fishing boat glides down the Gastineau Channel with Mount Juneau and Alaska's capital city as a backdrop Friday in Juneau, Alaska. State lawmakers must make an extra effort when planning their annual journey to the capital since it's reachable only by air or boat.

cade-old argument that may surface again this legislative session, which began Monday. Juneau Mayor Bruce Botelho's drive to build a new more spacious and grand Capitol has started the debate again.

Juneau became the territory's capital at the beginning of the 20th century, as its population grew because of gold mine jobs. But after World War II, people began moving into the interior and south-central parts of the state.

Today, Anchorage, which is 558 miles northwest of Juneau by air,

along the central coast, and Fairbanks, which is 628 miles northwest of the capital, in the interior, account for well over half of Alaska's 630,000 residents, and now many argue that the capital should be moved closer to the people.

To make Juneau more accessible, the state has been studying a \$285 million proposal to punch a road through to connect the capital with the 1,500-mile Alaska Highway.

But many residents dismiss the idea, saying a road would destroy the main part of what makes the city unique.

Pfizer to scrub ads touting Listerine as floss substitute

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The maker of Listerine mouthwash will spend \$2 million to replace what a judge called misleading advertising suggesting the product is as effective as flossing at fighting plaque and gingivitis.

About 4,000 workers will be deployed around the country to place stickers over the claim on Listerine bottles and to remove similar advertisements that hang on bottlenecks, a lawyer for Pfizer Inc. told a federal judge Monday.

Television, print and medical-journal ads using the campaign are also being pulled, and the as-effective-as-floss campaign has also been removed from the Listerine Web site, lawyer Tom Smart said.

U.S. District Judge Denny Chin of Manhattan ruled Friday that the advertising poses a public health risk and could undermine the message of dental professionals.

Chin said dentists have been urging patients to floss for decades because the benefits "are real — they are not a myth."

McNeil-PPC Inc., a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson, sued Pfizer over the campaign, which began in June, saying it posed an unfair threat to its sales of dental floss.

The suit may still go forward, and Pfizer spokesman Tom Smart said the company was considering an appeal of Chin's injunction.



Rhein BMW presents
Valentine's Day Greetings
 Brought to you by Stars and Stripes

A great way to show you care. Surprise them with a Valentine's Day Greeting!

Messages in the Mid-East edition begin at no charge!
Messages in the European edition start at \$29

*Five lucky winners, chosen at random will receive an official BMW-Williams Formula One Team Jacket

Visit www.strips.com. Click on the link for Valentine's Day

Greetings publish in Stars and Stripes on February 14!

Messages for the Mid-East edition will also publish on www.strips.com beginning 11 Feb

Deadline for messages 27 Jan 05, Drawing on 14 Feb 05

*No purchase necessary to win.

Background checks

MA BOSTON — State regulators are beginning criminal background checks of physicians applying to practice medicine in Massachusetts. It's an effort to protect the public, says Nancy Achin Andros, the executive director of the State Board of Registration in Medicine. Doctors already must disclose criminal histories on license applications, but some hide their convictions. Massachusetts becomes the 21st state to institute the checks.



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Improper cleaning

NC RALEIGH — Two Duke University Health System hospitals in Durham and Raleigh, N.C., have notified about 4,000 patients that they may have been operated on with surgical instruments that weren't properly cleaned.

Although letters to patients don't specify what happened, drums labeled "detergent" actually contained a petroleum-based hydraulic fluid that was piped into the instrument-cleaning system at Duke Health Raleigh Hospital and Durham Regional Hospital.

Hospital officials say patient care was not compromised because all instruments were properly sterilized in a separate step.

Maple sugar museum

NH ORFORD — The group that represents New Hampshire maple syrup producers is making plans for the mother of all sap houses — a New Hampshire maple sugar museum.

The New Hampshire Maple Producers Association has received a gift of the largest collection of antique sugaring tools and equipment in North America, and is trying to find a place to put it.

Its vice president, Peter Thomson of Orford, says money is being raised to provide a fire-safe building to temporarily store the artifacts while the group plans a permanent museum.

The collection is a gift from Charlie Stewart of Sugar Hill, who has been collecting the artifacts for many years, Thomson said.

Creature comforts

CA SAN FRANCISCO — In San Francisco, where orphaned animals live in "pet condos" at the SPCA, pet parents are called "guardians" instead of "owners," and well-behaved canines are enrolled in doggie day care, now comes a law mandating more creature comforts for the creatures.

The ordinance, expected to be approved by the Board of Supervisors, spells out exactly what the city means by providing food, shelter and water to dogs.

The food: palatable and nutritious. The water: changed at least once a day and provided in a non-tipping bowl. The shelter: big enough for the canine to stand up and turn around in and with a raised floor and dry, clean bedding for when the "ambient temperature falls below that ... to which the dog is acclimated."

Medical screenings

CT HARTFORD — Legislation on breast cancer screenings is receiving a boost from Gov.

M. Jodi Rell's battle with the disease. Two newly filed bills would expand the type of screenings insurance companies would be required to cover. Rell, a longtime advocate for breast cancer awareness, underwent a mastectomy and reconstructive surgery. Her doctors say her prognosis is excellent.

School dances canceled

CA LEMOORE — Fed up with students' racy moves, a principal has taken the unusual step of canceling the rest of this year's school dances.

Principal Jim Bennett of Lemoore Union High School said he warned students at a winter formal dance last month to either quit dirty dancing or face the possibility of not dancing at all.

But he said the students continued "freak dancing," a form of sexually suggestive dancing that involves grinding the hips and pelvic area.

The ban on dances includes the school's Sadie Hawkins dance in February and the junior and senior proms in the spring, but Bennett said they could be rescheduled if students modify their behavior.

"It's really up to the kids at this point. They have to take some responsibility," Bennett said.

Road proves deadly

KY PIKEVILLE — U.S. 23 through Pike County had more deaths than any other road in Kentucky from 1999 through last November, a newspaper reported. Thirty-eight people died in 31 accidents on the road.



Flying Elvis

A telemarketing Elvis, Charlie Curle, enjoys a run during Mount Rose's annual Elvis Day celebration near Reno, Nev.

dependents on the road. The Lexington Herald-Leader conducted a county-by-county analysis that reviewed every traffic fatality, including pedestrian deaths and ATV accidents, on publicly maintained roads.

Suspect arrested

TN ELIZABETHTON — A man was arrested on charges he made dozens of obscene phone calls from an unexpected place — a hospital intensive care waiting room.

Hank Steve Williams, 38, was charged with 38 counts of telephone harassment.

Officials said the suspect, who is not an employee of Sycamore Shoals Hospital, made the calls to at least five different women he didn't know over the past two months.

"He really had reached a comfort zone," said Elizabethton Police Capt. Mike Peters. "He knew the calls wouldn't be traced back to his number and he developed a pattern of making calls between 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. on weekdays and noon and 2 p.m. on weekends."

Investigators arrested Williams after a surveillance camera allegedly caught him using the waiting room phone. Other evidence indicates such calls had been coming from the hospital since 2002, they said.

End to bison hunt

MT HELENA — Montana canceled what would have been the state's first bison hunt in more than a decade.

The Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission's 4-1 vote came after new Gov. Brian Schweitzer expressed strong misgivings about the hunt and the potential bad publicity for the state.

The hunting of bison that wander from Yellowstone National Park each winter was canceled in 1991 after a barrage of protests and bad publicity. But the 2003 Legislature authorized bison hunting to resume.

Many bison in the park carry the disease brucellosis, which can cause cattle to abort. Montana ranchers fear the bison will spread the disease to their herds, although there has not been a documented case of that happening.

More than 8,200 people applied for 10 hunting licenses that were to be issued through a drawing.

Attack on seniors

VA ALEXANDRIA — Police have charged a housekeeper with a violent crime after she knifed seven people, including four residents in their 90s, in seemingly random attacks at the facility.

The 30-year-old man took a knife and slashed and stabbed people in an office, hallway and living areas at Goodwin House Alexandria before a visitor managed to disarm him, said Alexandria police Capt. John Crawford.

The victims were taken to area hospitals. Their injuries apparently weren't life-threatening, but there is concern about the elderly victims' ability to recover, police spokeswoman Amy Bertsch said.

The suspect had been employed at Goodwin House for about a year and had no history of discipline problems, Goodwin House spokeswoman Corleen Ryan Mallon said.



Catch of the day

Watermen haul in oysters at Deep Creek in Newport News, Va. Watermen are seeing a new and thriving area of oysters in the James River between Deep Creek and the James River Bridge, something that hasn't happened for more than a decade.



Sinking feeling

A residence is partially swallowed by a sinkhole in Orange City, Fla. The sinkhole damaged two houses in Volusia County and forced the evacuation of 11 other homes. At 110 feet wide, it was the second largest sinkhole to open in Volusia County in less than two months.



On the run

Hundreds of runners begin the Walt Disney Marathon in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.



BITTIRIT ...

Snow and ice stick to the snout of a black Angus cow in a pasture near Fairfield, Mont. The animal was grazing in a field blanketed by four inches of snow.



Changing times

One of at least four wooden boats that a researcher suggests were built in the late 19th or early 20th century lies in the mud near a boat ramp on the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River in Chesapeake, Va.



Tugboat accident

The tugboat Elizabeth M. is seen by the gates of the Montgomery Island Dam on the Ohio River at Industry, Pa., where it was swept to after an accident. The tugboat, pushing six barges of coal, sank after entering the dam, killing three crewmembers. One person was missing and believed to be aboard the tugboat.



Home, sweet home

Spectators watch from the deck of the Hampton Inn and Suites as the USS John C. Stennis arrives in Bremerton, Wash. The Stennis changed homeport from San Diego to Kitsap Naval Base in Bremerton.

Oil company fined

AK ANCHORAGE — London-based BP agreed to pay civil fines totaling nearly \$1.4 million for two safety violations in Alaska's Prudhoe Bay oil field, including a 2002 well explosion that badly injured an Anchorage man. The amount to be paid in the mishap that injured employee Don Shugak, almost \$1.3 million, is one of the largest penalties the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission has levied against an oil company.

Painter pleads guilty

IN INDIANAPOLIS — A man pleaded guilty to homicide charges for starting a fire in the back of a truck carrying a house-painting crew, turning the vehicle into a rolling inferno that killed two men.

Prosecutors told Tommy C. McElroy flicked a lighter to ignite a splash of lacquer thinner that had been thrown toward a co-worker as a practical joke. His action ignited a fireball that left the 13 painters badly burned as the truck raced along the highway in rush-hour traffic.

McElroy, 27, faces up to eight years in prison when he is sentenced next month. He pleaded guilty to two counts of reckless homicide and one count of criminal recklessness.

Outside court, fire victims and their loved ones expressed outrage at the way they called an inadequate penalty for someone who caused so much agony.

The driver did not stop the truck until after the 13 men in the cargo hold began screaming and the vehicle shifted as they struggled to escape. Most of the painters were still on fire as they jumped or fell from the truck.

Place for remains

NY SYRACUSE — Three Franciscan nuns from upstate New York plan to travel to Hawaii to bring back the remains of a woman who led their religious community more than a century ago and may be considered for sainthood.

Mother Marianne Cope's remains will be placed in the convent's chapel while the women decide whether they will build a special chapel to honor her.

Sister Grace Anne Dillenschneider, Sister Patricia Burkard, general minister of the community, and Sister Mary Laurence Hanley plan to leave Jan. 22. The exhumation is expected to begin Jan. 24. They expect to return with Mother Cope's remains in February.

Pope John Paul II last month accepted a report of a miracle attributed to the intervention of Mother Cope. The case involved a Syracuse teenager who had suffered multiple organ failure and recovered after she was touched by a relic of Mother Cope and prayers sought her intercession in the girl's healing.

Dog adopted

TX FLOWER MOUND — A dog that apparently hitched a ride halfway across the country now has a 12-acre ranch to roam although her new owner says Carla will spend much of her time inside.

The mixed-breed dog, thought to

be about 11 years old, was adopted by Mira Jones, one of the Flower Mound Humane Society volunteers who had cared for her since she showed up in Denton in December. The dog had escaped from her home in Castle Rock, Wash., and was found covered with ice at a truck stop near Amarillo before being taken to a veterinary hospital in Denton.

The dog was identified through an implanted microchip and her owner, Gail Scott, asked that she be put up for adoption because of the difficulty in returning her to Washington.

Although Scott received offers to pay for the dog's transportation back to Washington, she agreed to let the adoption proceed after humane society officials balked at returning her.

Record lion sightings

ND MINOT — A record 63 mountain lion sightings were reported last year in the state, wildlife officials said. Only seven of the sightings were confirmed through tracks, photographs and one carcass, biologist Jacquie Ermer said. Until last year, the sightings in the state since the early 1960s totaled fewer than 100.

Houses won't boot bats

VT MANCHESTER — A proposed housing project wouldn't affect an area where hundreds of endangered Indiana bats are known to hibernate, wildlife officials say.

Developers Tommy Harmon and Neil Joseph are seeking a state land use permit to build 27 housing units at the Rockingham Farm on Route 7A, just south of Manchester village.

The site is adjacent to what was recently identified as Vermont's largest Indiana bat cave, which is home to 297 of the creatures.

Several other bat species also hibernate in the cave, including the little brown bat, northern long-eared bat and eastern pipistrelle, said state wildlife biologist Scott Darling.

Dems held accused

WI MADISON — Some Wisconsin's top Democrats are among those who contributed thousands of dollars to help former state lawmakers Brian Burke and Chuck Chvala fight felony charges stemming from a corruption probe, according to an Associated Press review of state records. Donors included one of Gov. Jim Doyle's top aides and the state party's chairwoman. Burke's trial is scheduled for October. Chvala's trial has been delayed.

Waiving tuition

LA BATON ROUGE — The University of Louisiana system will drop all or part of tuition for students whose families were affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami. The waivers for at least one semester will depend on each school's budget. About 780 students from Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand, the areas hit hardest, attend the eight universities. The president of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette said he expects about 100 of his school's 226 international students to qualify for the waiver.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES



Fans grill Ludacris

Rapper asked about women, singing, and ruling the world

BY RAGUIYAH MAYS
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Ludacris has been interviewed so many times, it's ludicrous.

No with his fourth album, "Red Light District," debuting at No. 1 on the Billboard chart this week, we decided to ask some around-the-way folks what they want to know about the superstar rapper with the quicksilver tongue.

Q: What's up, Luda. Sunny, a radio DJ on Hot 97 in New York City, had the following question: We've seen various artists begin as rappers, then later in their career switch to singing, like Andre 3000 and Queen Latifah. Are you next? **A:** I like to call it "ghetto harmonizing." On the new album, there's a song called, "Blue Berry Yum Yum." But it's nothing in the realm of any of those people just named that are singing on their albums. It's almost like I'm rapping and singing at the same time. I don't even know how to explain it. It's weird.

Q: There was a time in hip-hop when singing was considered weak. When did it become OK for MCs to sing?

A: When they've already proven they can rap — like Andre 3000. He's the perfect example. He rapped for five or six straight albums. So when you try to reinvent yourself and be creative and go to that next album, you can't blame him for [singing] because what more can you rap about. So taking it a step further, trying to harmonize or even sing, and people like it? He's captured a whole new audience. So I think it's cool. As long as you stay true to yourself.

Q: Have you ever serenaded a girl with a song?

A: I really can't say that I have. But maybe soon to come, who knows. Instead of serenading with singing, I'd probably rap to a girl. My first song was, "I'm cool I'm bad I might be ten." But I can't survive without my girlfriend. I've done some romantic things in my time. I hired somebody to put rose petals at [a girl's] feet for a day on her birthday.

Q: Wow! That's nice. Well, since we're talking about women, 29-year-old Courtney Patterson from Baltimore wants to know if you'd date a girl who had pimples and other physical imperfections, but a really big butt.

A: I have. I try not to judge. I let God judge. But I definitely love girls with beautiful feet. I have a foot fetish.

Messed up feet, man — sometimes she can trick me and just wear boots and not even show her feet. But when I see the feet, it's a wrap.

Q: I know the ladies love Ludacris. Even girls who are 29-year-old Evelyn Leduc from New York, who wants to know the chances of a skinny white girl like her with small breasts and no butt getting into one of your videos?

A: Extremely possible. There have been some. She just probably didn't see them. But I don't discriminate and I do make a conscious effort to pick some of the girls that are in my videos. It's just about the concept of the song and

how I think they will fit into the whole realm of what's going on. My next video, I'm going to have a lot of overweight beautiful women in it.

Q: So it's only a matter of time before I just go ahead and get a bunch of skinny, no-butt-and-breasts white girls in the video.

Q: That would be an interesting way to create diversity and address the obesity problem in America. Would you run for public office?

A: I can't see myself doing that right now. But I would never say never. I look at myself as a leader, so obviously I would do that. Try to make some changes.

Q: Kevin Ryals, a 24-year-old from the Bronx, wants to know: If you ruled the world, what would you do?

A: The first thing I'd do is get Bush out of the presidency and bring Bill Clinton back. Besides that, I would deal with the debt. I would pay off the deficit. And of course I would deal with a lot of homeless issues, insurance issues for senior citizens. I would deal with the AIDS issue. I would just try to change what we feel is wrong today. There's no limit to that.

Q: Zayda Rivera, a 24-year-old writer and assistant editor with The Ave magazine, wants to know how your trip to Africa changed your perspective on life in the United States.

A: As it just makes me really value everything that I have because there are a lot of unfortunate people out there — way more than people here. So it makes me value life a lot more.

Q: What's the most memorable thing you saw in Africa?

A: Their projects compared to ours. It looked like a damn tent set up in the middle of a dirt road no bigger than my arm's reach. Thousands of them, in Soweto. I was there for a week, last year December. They were singing "Stand Up." It was amazing enough that I went to a whole other continent, 16 hours away, and they're singing my song. Crazy.

Q: Zayda also wants to know if this trip helped motivate your work with the Ludacris Foundation?

A: The motivation comes from how you feel good when you do good. It's that feeling and knowing that what you do is the right thing. Like when somebody gave you something when you were a kid, and how good you feel way. Knowing that I can do that and make people feel that way, that's the motivation.

Q: It's good to feel like a kid every now and then. One 14-year-old kid from Brooklyn named Malik Turner wants to know what you're working on next.

A: After this album is the fifth album. I'll probably be called "Release Therapy" because I'll be my last album in my deal. Two movies coming up, a John Singleton produced called "Hustle and Flow," a southern hood classic about a pimp trying to get into the music game. It sounds crazy, but it's gonna be a classic film. And there's a movie called "Crash" I did with Sandra Bullock, Brendan Fraser, Loretta Devine and Don Cheadle.

Will Smith drops hotel project

The Fresh Prince has given up on plans to develop a hotel in his hometown.

Philadelphia-born actor and rapper Will Smith had won preliminary city approval several years ago to build a hotel and retail complex on a derelict property in the city's centuries-old Society Hill section.

The luxury hotel would have had views of the Delaware River and been within walking distance of tourist attractions like South Street and Independence Hall. The city had pledged \$9 million in tax incentives to help the development take place.

But the project stalled in recent years as the hotel market softened, and Smith and his brother have now sold the vacant lot where the complex was to have been built. The sale price was \$10.5 million, about three times what the family paid for the parcel five years ago.

The new owners, Star Properties, have a plan to build condominiums.



Smith

Pie-tossing comedian gets a star

Comedian Soupy Sales, who once said a pie in the eye was worth two in the sky, saw his predictive pie-tossing pay off with a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame.

"I appreciate this from the bottom of my heart and I appreciate you all coming here in the rain," Sales, who was seated in a wheelchair, said Friday.

The rain forced the ceremony to be held inside the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, with Hollywood's honorary mayor, Johnny Grant, setting up the 79-year-old comic's classic schtick.

"Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr. had pies thrown in their face by Soupy Sales and I want to belong to that club," Grant said.

The star was the Walk's 2,274th. Celebrities attending included actor Peter Marshall and actress Nancy Allen.



Sales

Producer-director awarded an Eddie

Producer-director James L. Brooks will add an Eddie to his shelf of Oscars and Emmys.

Brooks will receive the ACE Golden Eddie Filmmaker of the Year award on Feb. 20 in Beverly Hills.

The award is one of several handed out by American Cinema Editors.

Brooks is being honored for "his consistent excellence and craftsmanship and his unique ability to capture the human spirit on screens big and small," the group's board of directors said in a statement Friday.

Brooks has produced such movies as "Terms of Endearment," "Jerry Maguire" and the current "Spanglish." He has been executive producer on such hit shows as "Taxi" and "The Simpsons."

Hong Kong pop star bags 5 trophies

Pop star Andy Lau dominated the annual Hong Kong Jade Solid Gold music awards, bagging five trophies, including the prize for most popular Hong Kong male singer in Asia.

In one of his acceptance speeches Saturday, Lau offered best wishes for people whose relatives are missing in the recent tsunami disaster, expressing hopes that their loved ones will be found, newspapers reported.

Lau also was named most popular male singer in Hong Kong, while three of his songs won individual honors. "Masseuse" was named one of the year's top 10 songs, while "After All I Have Love," clinched the most popular Chinese song prize.

Lau, one of the Hong Kong pop scene's "Four Heavenly Kings," has kept up his popularity with a steady stream of music and film releases.

In other awards presented Saturday night, Joey Yung was named Hong Kong's most popular female singer. Kelly Chen won the award for most popular Hong Kong female singer in Asia.



Lau

YOUR MONEY

Safe path to opening e-mail

Q. I am running Windows XP and use Outlook Express for e-mail.

Although I never open e-mail I don't recognize, I discovered that I can view e-mails and all information by right-clicking on the e-mail and selecting Properties. The e-mail header remains selected as though it has not been opened.

Is my computer being exposed to viruses by viewing e-mails this way? — Marty Phillips @cox.net

A. Your inquiry serves to either clear up or increase a lot of confusion over handling possibly dangerous e-mail messages in Outlook Express, Mr. P. The last time this column took up the murky issue of avoiding attacks by way of e-mail messages, I added to the heat rather than shedding light by approaching the subject a bit backwards.

People worry — as they should — that some kind of booby trap may be tucked away in these rich-content e-mails. When I approached it from the other side — by allowing these things to be displayed — a lot of folks got confused.

Whether you love them or hate them, Outlook Express uses the same settings to toggle e-mail attachments and other rich content on or off. Most of these settings are reached by clicking on Tools and then Options in the OE display. Look for the tabs for Read and Security. A number of check boxes there let you force all messages to come in as text-only and to block all incoming graphics and other embellishments that conceivably carry viruses like the notorious "Klez."

You check and uncheck boxes based on your estimation of the risk.

Since one can always go back and change these settings by adding or removing check marks, it's safe enough to experiment a bit to see what fits best for you.

And what a better way to feel things out than to use that little trick you mention where one right-clicks on a message in the Outlook Express display and then selects Properties.


In OE 6.0, this brings up a pair of windows. The first, called General, shows all the information about sending times, addresses and routings. There

also is a box marked Details that brings up a Message Source button that strips all of the hot links and other stuff, making it safe to open even nasty booby-trapped stuff.

You can even paint this harmless text and copy it into a word processor to get all the words and none of the wonkery. It's an excellent suggestion, Mr. F., and I thank you as I am sure will many readers.

Q. This is driving me crazy. I have the NASA Web site as my home page, and like to save the great pictures of stars and galaxies as my desktop wallpaper. When I used Netscape 4.7 as my browser, I could browse the JPEG files from Web Wallpaper and save them on the Control Panel drop-down list of wallpaper choices, and see the preview before applying the file.

Now I'm using Netscape 7.0. When I try to perform these maneuvers, the file appears on the drop-down menu as a bitmap file opened with MS Paint, does not appear as a preview, and doesn't save in the drop-down menu. Any suggestions? — Mariss McCucker. Dixon. Mont.



A. The culprit usually is a bit of code designed to run animations of Web sites when browsers act like yours. Whether the browser is Netscape or Microsoft Internet Explorer or some other flavor, the bit of bad code will suddenly force the browser to insist that every picture file it opens is in the bulky BMP format instead of its actual format.

Coates In the latest Netscape versions, clear out the cache of Web pages along with the trouble-causing animations they seem to include. To do this, click on Edit and then Preferences in the drop-down menu. Select the Advanced category and you will find a Cache heading.

A second thing to check with Netscape is that the browser is set to access all formats of pictures. This setting is under the Privacy and Security heading on that same Preferences menu. Open Privacy and Security and click on the Images choice. There select the Accept All Images box.

Contact Jim Coates at jcoates@tribune.com, or at the Chicago Tribune, Room 400, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. Questions can be answered only through this column. Add your point of view at www.chicagotribune.com/askjim.



Jim Coates



Rex Wiederanders of IBM and other volunteers prepare computers for shipment to Thailand last week in Eagan, Minn. IBM and several Minnesota companies have teamed up to send 1,000 specially equipped laptop computers to Thailand to help identify tsunami victims. The volunteer effort included Eden Prairie software developer Laser Data Command Inc., Anderson Cargo Services of Eagan, Northwest Airlines Inc., IBM and other equipment makers.

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MONDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

EXCHANGE RATES

INDEXES							Military rates	
52-week		Low Name	Last	Net chg	% YTD chg	52-wk high		
High	Down							
18,640	18,640	Down Industrials	1,613.81	+21.8	+1.7	18,640	Euro costs	\$1,356
3,031.96	2,743.46	Down Transportation	1,663.23	+25.65	+1.7	3,031.96	Dollar buys	107,004
1,458.50	1,458.50	Down Chemicals	1,458.50	+25.65	+1.7	1,458.50	British pound	102.90
7,717.31	6,231.33	Down Utilities	7,080.70	+24.19	+3.4	7,717.31	South Korean won (Jan 12)	1,027.90
1,425.00	1,210.13	Arms index	1,397.96	+24.19	+3.4	1,425.00	South Korean won (Jan 11)	1,027.90
1,217.98	1,069.72	Down Tech	1,297.68	+24.19	+3.4	1,217.98	Commercial rates	\$1,575
656.11	546.29	S&P 500	1,196.25	+45.6	+3.4	656.11	British pound	102.90
10,152	10,152	S&P MidCap	1,196.25	+45.6	+3.4	10,152	Denmark (Krone)	6.56
656.11	546.29	Russ 2000	617.74	+24.19	+3.4	656.11	Denmark (Krone)	6.56
10,152	10,152	Russ 2000	617.74	+24.19	+3.4	10,152	Swedish (Krona)	10.36
10,152	10,152	Russ 2000	617.74	+24.19	+3.4	10,152	Hong Kong (Dollar)	\$1,009.78
10,152	10,152	Russ 2000	617.74	+24.19	+3.4	10,152	China (Yuan)	187.44

Military rates	
Euro costs	\$1,3506
Dollar buys	€0.7404
British pound	\$1.93
Japanese yen (Jan. 12)	102.00
South Korean won (Jan. 11)	1,027.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.37699
British pound	\$1.8765
Canada (Dollar)	1.2227
Denmark (Krone)	5.24
Egypt (Pound)	9.5949
Euro	\$1.3092/0.7638
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.794
Hungary (Forint)	187.44
Israel (Yron)	6.048

NYSE

Waves	AC/ITVE	ISL	GR	Waves	AC/ITVE	ISL	GR	Waves	AC/ITVE	ISL	GR
Waves	Last	Q1	Q4	Waves	Last	Q1	Q4	Waves	Last	Q1	Q4
Armenia	34.00	34.00	34.00	Armenia	34.00	34.00	34.00	Philippines	56.12	56.12	56.12
Australia	34.00	34.00	34.00	Australia	34.00	34.00	34.00	Poland	56.12	56.12	56.12
Brazil	43.00	34.00	34.00	Brazil	28.00	34.00	34.00	Singapore (Dollar)	1.62	1.62	1.62
Canada	34.00	34.00	34.00	Canada	34.00	34.00	34.00	South Korea (Won)	1,652.90	1,652.90	1,652.90
France	43.00	34.00	34.00	France	28.00	34.00	34.00	Switzerland (Franc)	1.62	1.62	1.62
Germany	34.00	34.00	34.00	Germany	34.00	34.00	34.00	Thailand (Baht)	39.15	39.15	39.15
India	34.00	34.00	34.00	India	34.00	34.00	34.00	United States (Dollar)	1.62	1.62	1.62
Japan	34.00	34.00	34.00	Japan	34.00	34.00	34.00				
North Africa	34.00	34.00	34.00	North Africa	34.00	34.00	34.00				
Poland	56.12	56.12	56.12	Poland	56.12	56.12	56.12				
South Korea	1,652.90	1,652.90	1,652.90	South Korea	1,652.90	1,652.90	1,652.90				
Switzerland	1.62	1.62	1.62	Switzerland	1.62	1.62	1.62				
Thailand	39.15	39.15	39.15	Thailand	39.15	39.15	39.15				
United States	1.62	1.62	1.62	United States	1.62	1.62	1.62				

X	NAS
101	Most Active

Waves	AC/ITVE	ISL	GR	Waves	AC/ITVE	ISL	GR	Waves	AC/ITVE	ISL	GR
Waves	Last	Q1	Q4	Waves	Last	Q1	Q4	Waves	Last	Q1	Q4
Armenia	34.00	34.00	34.00	Armenia	34.00	34.00	34.00	Philippines	56.12	56.12	56.12
Australia	34.00	34.00	34.00	Australia	34.00	34.00	34.00	Poland	56.12	56.12	56.12
Brazil	43.00	34.00	34.00	Brazil	28.00	34.00	34.00	Singapore (Dollar)	1.62	1.62	1.62
Canada	34.00	34.00	34.00	Canada	34.00	34.00	34.00	South Korea (Won)	1,652.90	1,652.90	1,652.90
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Germany	34.00	34.00	34.00	Germany	34.00	34.00	34.00	Thailand (Baht)	39.15	39.15	39.15
India	34.00	34.00	34.00	India	34.00	34.00	34.00	United States (Dollar)	1.62	1.62	1.62
Japan	34.00	34.00	34.00	Japan	34.00	34.00	34.00				
North Africa	34.00	34.00	34.00	North Africa	34.00	34.00	34.00				
Poland	56.12	56.12	56.12	Poland	56.12	56.12	56.12				
South Korea	1,652.90	1,652.90	1,652.90	South Korea	1,652.90	1,652.90	1,652.90				
Switzerland	1.62	1.62	1.62	Switzerland	1.62	1.62	1.62				
Thailand	39.15	39.15	39.15	Thailand	39.15	39.15	39.15				
United States	1.62	1.62	1.62	United States	1.62	1.62	1.62				

ASDAQ
TIME 12:15 PM
Jap
Ku
Nor

Waves	AC/ITVE	ISL	GR	Waves	AC/ITVE	ISL	GR	Waves	AC/ITVE	ISL	GR
Waves	Last	Q1	Q4	Waves	Last	Q1	Q4	Waves	Last	Q1	Q4
Armenia	34.00	34.00	34.00	Armenia	34.00	34.00	34.00	Philippines	56.12	56.12	56.12
Australia	34.00	34.00	34.00	Australia	34.00	34.00	34.00	Poland	56.12	56.12	56.12
Brazil	43.00	34.00	34.00	Brazil	28.00	34.00	34.00	Singapore (Dollar)	1.62	1.62	1.62
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India	34.00	34.00	34.00	India	34.00	34.00	34.00	United States (Dollar)	1.62	1.62	1.62
Japan	34.00	34.00	34.00	Japan	34.00	34.00	34.00				
North Africa	34.00	34.00	34.00	North Africa	34.00	34.00	34.00				
Poland	56.12	56.12	56.12	Poland	56.12	56.12	56.12				
South Korea	1,652.90	1,652.90	1,652.90	South Korea	1,652.90	1,652.90	1,652.90				
Switzerland	1.62	1.62	1.62	Switzerland	1.62	1.62	1.62				
Thailand	39.15	39.15	39.15	Thailand	39.15	39.15	39.15				
United States	1.62	1.62	1.62	United States	1.62	1.62	1.62				

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS

[illegible]

KEY MUTUAL FUNDS

[illegible]

Horoscope

Responsibilities are numerous and bulky, but the reward for taking them on is equally substantial. During the void-of-course moon early today, let your subconscious do the heavy lifting for you. Relax, go slow, and do some daydreaming. You'll pick up the time-saving details you would have missed had you been intent on forward movement.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(January 12). You're fearless — maybe because you sense that positive change is in the air this year. Most exciting is a surprising twist in your love life, occurring around February. If you're looking for new romance, your best chances are while traveling, at sporting events or in places of study, such as schools or libraries. Love signs are Aries and Sagittarius.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Boldly push forward with your plans. Boldly scold at any obstacles in your way. Do not let anything distract you from seeing your project through to completion. For rams, a touch of tunnel vision is a good thing.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The universe whispers sweet nothings in your ear. Do something kind for yourself, such as getting a massage, facial, manicure or pedicure. You're likely to run into a friend while out and about and get all the latest dish.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You feel more grounded and earth-bound than usual, which could make an air sign like you believe your wings have been clipped. It's really a blessing in disguise, however. Think about what is, not about what could be.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Your soft inner self, the part you normally hide beneath that crab-like coat of armor, needs an extra love. You're feeling vulnerable and may see sights where none exist. Meditate. Get your rest. Rent a hilarious movie.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Others take you seriously and see you in a

new light, with deeper love and more respect. You're free to speak with authority, yet are not afraid to ask for assistance when necessary. Your sense of duty and responsibility prevails.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your friends are pulling for you, helping you accomplish the basics. But why survive when you can thrive? Feeling overwhelmed is just a sign that you should add more responsibility to your plate. That way, you can prioritize.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). An unexpected deviation in your daily routine brings the "wow" factor — anything from an unforeseen opportunity to enjoy a beautiful change of scenery to a chance encounter with the next big love of your life.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). An object of great emotional value to you — something for your home or reminiscent of childhood — was once out of reach but is now easily obtained. Money flows a little smoother, too, so plurge.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A sibling or neighbor is looking out for you, making you feel nurtured and protected. Pay it forward with random acts of kindness for others. Someone in your social circle would love to hear from you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Sometimes, you just have to open your mouth and let out a long, loud, full-bodied scream. This is best done alone, in a closed-up car on a sparsely traveled road. You'll rest sweetly tonight.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Flirtation spices up your day. You could meet someone sassy or indulge in harmless games with an attractive co-worker. Keep it light — this one is purely for fun. If you're in a committed relationship, expect extra zing and zip.

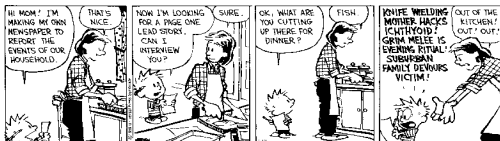
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Taking a practical approach to your love life pays off in surprising ways. Keep your head on straight, and you could suddenly reap rewards through your partner's friends and family. An exciting travel opportunity is possible, too.

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Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



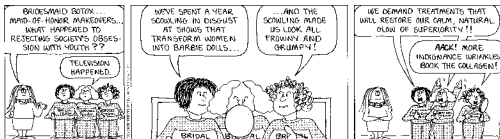
Jump Start



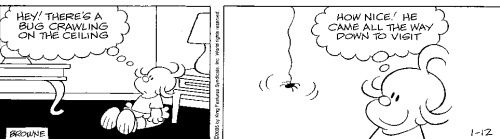
Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



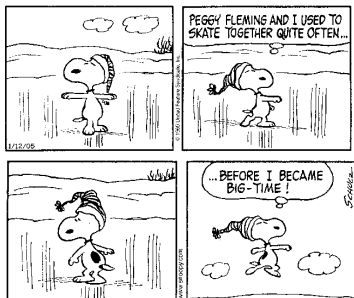
Red Rover



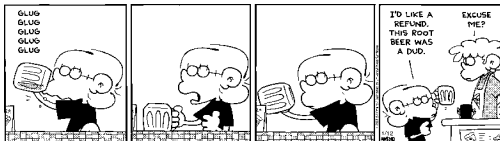
Better or Worse



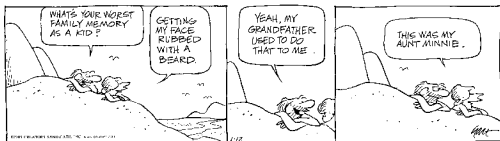
Peanuts



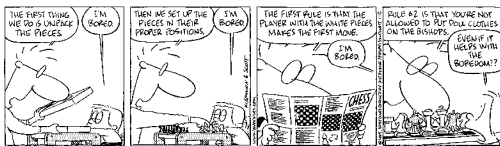
Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



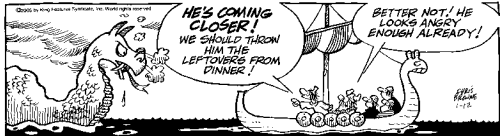
Blondie



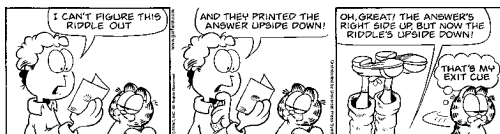
Dilbert



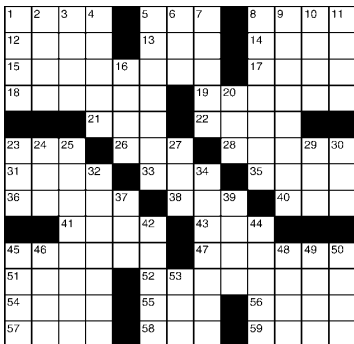
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

1 Wields an axe

5 Crony

8 Gets ready to rumble

12 Rue the run

13 George's brother

14 Seethe

15 3/17 emblem

17 Willie E.'s supplier

18 Caudron contents

19 Exploited

21 Seek damages

22 Sufficient, old-style

23 Manhandle

26 X rating?

28 Prepare to propose

31 Curved molding

33 Clark or Rogers

35 Ticklish Muppet

36 Fortune-tellers

38 Party bowlful

40 Drag

41 "Mona —"

43 Dawn goddess

45 Toy maker

47 Andean pack

51 "— Rhythm"

52 Agenda

54 "Smooth Operator"

55 Honest politician

56 Neighborhood

57 Stumped (on)

58 Dismember

59 Jerry's longtime partner

Down

1 Padlocked

2 Cave comeback

3 Repeat that, please

4 Big trucks

5 Trailblazer

6 Joan of —

7 Delibes opera

8 Ear shell

9 "Saturday Evening"

10 It goes without saying

11 Coaster

12 Defeat big-time

13 Post" illustrator

14 Buggy terrain

15 Cruising

16 Musial or Lee

17 Kyoto

18 cumberbund

19 Affix a signature

20 Grammy category

21 Khan title

22 Affluent

23 Affirmative action

24 Down Under bird

25 Record

26 Sent forth

27 Gave way

28 Away from NNW

29 Lauren trademark

30 Sacrifice site

31 Dieter's lunch

32 Fine spray

33 Culture medium

34 Cruising

35 Musial or Lee

36 Kyoto

37 cumberbund

Answer to Previous Puzzle



I-12

CRYPTOQUIP

J P Y F Y O I S Z B M I S F T
V S Y I S R V Z F T A Y U V Q
M U T R R T M Y R Y D O J P T, X T ' M

B S S D U T Y B B Q R X Y U A
Yesterday's Cryptquip: AFTER THE FATHER LET HIS WEE KIDS HAVE SEVERAL FELT-TIP PENS, HE WAS A MARKED MAN.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: R equals S

Past loves may incite jealousy

Dear Abby: I have been married almost two years and am having problems with my wife's male friends. She has never had a lot of female friends, and she has had physical relationships with some of her male friends in the past.

We have had several arguments over her relationships with these men and my inability to trust them. I agree with her on that point; however, I would feel awkward if she confided in a male friend if I and I ever got into a tiff.

I am really troubled by this. I believe it opens a great opportunity for the guy to make advances when she's at a low point. I recently was forwarded an e-mail from one of her male friends that referred to her as "Sweetie" and "Puddin' Pop." Is that right? Should I confront her on this? What should I do?

Dear Uneasy in Milwaukee: I am 29 and shy by nature. Before meeting "Jane," I never had a long-term relationship. I never met the woman of my dreams, the one who was made just for me, and the one I was made for. I am 29 and shy by nature. Before meeting "Jane," I never had a long-term relationship. I never met the woman of my dreams, the one who was made just for me, and the one I was made for. I am 29 and shy by nature. Before meeting "Jane," I never had a long-term relationship. I never met the woman of my dreams, the one who was made just for me, and the one I was made for.

Dear Abby



your feelings with her. That you are uneasy about her continuing a relationship with old lovers is understandable. However, to expect a woman who has always related better to men than to women to forgo friendships with men seems unrealistic.

Please talk this out with your wife. She was honest with you about it. Trust her unless she gives you reason not to do so.

Dear Abby: I have met the woman of my dreams, the one who was made just for me, and the one I was made for. I am 29 and shy by nature. Before meeting "Jane," I never had a long-term relationship. I never met the woman of my dreams, the one who was made just for me, and the one I was made for. I am 29 and shy by nature. Before meeting "Jane," I never had a long-term relationship. I never met the woman of my dreams, the one who was made just for me, and the one I was made for.

We are both having trouble forgetting the past. Although I know Jane loves

me and her exes mean nothing to her now, she still mentions their names in passing every so often. She still has photos of them, old letters, gifts, etc. It's a constant reminder of her past, and of mine, which was alone and depressed.

Just thinking about Jane in another man's arms, and how alone I was, tears me up inside. Why does she have these old things if I am her true love?

Wants No Reminders

Many people keep mementoes because they are souvenirs of happy times or memories. I'm sorry your past was lonely and sad, but for you to expect your girlfriend to come down with amnesia is unrealistic.

Since the souvenirs bother you, tell Jane how you feel. If she cares about your feelings, she'll put them away and store them with other dusty memorabilia.

Letters for this column — with your phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6940, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.uxpress.com/dearabby> Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

STURY
□ □ □ □ □

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PETIR
□ □ □ □ □

BRUPES
□ □ □ □ □

WALLOF
□ □ □ □ □

Ans: "□ □ □ □ □" "□ □ □ □ □"

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: LADLE HOBBY MOSAIC BODILY
Answer: Hard to raise after spring planting — HIS BODY

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argrion



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Don't address adopted child's race

Dear Annie: My husband and I have been married eight years and have tried to conceive a child with no success, so we decided to adopt a child of another race. This isn't a problem for my husband, my parents or the community in which we live. However, some members of my extended family have shown themselves to be racist.

When the time comes for the child to move into our home, and if there is a baby shower, how do I deal with breaking the news to these relatives that the child is of another race?

—Lots of Love in Ohio
Dear Ohio: You don't have to "break the news." We assume they will figure it out if they see the child and if they don't see the baby, you can send them a photo-graph announcing the adoption. You do not need to address the child's race any more than you would mention an issue of the color of the baby's eyes. If the relatives make derogatory comments,

Annie's Mailbox



remind them that this is your child and insist that they behave themselves.

Dear Annie: I just read the letter from "Need Advice to Give Advice," who asked how to help a friend going through a divorce. Here are some words of wisdom from a divorce lawyer of 21 years:

1. Don't badmouth the spouse. The couple may reconcile, in which case things will be awkward for you. Saying he's a big jerk doesn't necessarily make her feel better. It just says she had lousy judgment in choosing him in the first place or for still caring about him.
2. Do offer her opportunities to do fun things that make her smile and will lift her spirits. An invitation to do something on a Saturday night, when she may be feeling especially lonely, can be priceless.
3. Do include her in couples'

activities. Lots of singles report feeling quite abandoned by their married friends.

4. Do be alert for signs of depression — weight gain or loss, lack of energy, failure to keep her residence clean and orderly, sleeping a lot, etc.

5. Do be sensitive to the unique needs of a newly single parent. Sometimes just finding time to get a haircut can be hard. Volunteer to baby-sit for a few hours.

6. Don't offer her legal or accounting advice, but do be alert to financial needs. A gift certificate for a cleaning service, a manicure or a restaurant can be welcome.

—D.F. in Indiana
Dear D.F.: Thank you for providing some good suggestions for those who wonder how to behave during a friend's divorce. You have helped someone today.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 577 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

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Family Circus



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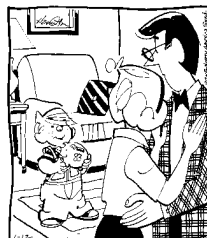
"Sounds time-consuming."

GRAFFITI

NEVER GIVE AN EXCUSE EVEN YOU WOULDN'T ACCEPT

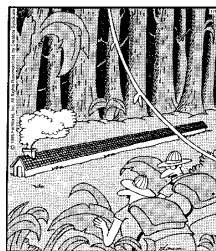
NEA 1/12/05

Domis the Menace



"SINCE YOU GOT A RAISE, DAD, DOES THAT MEAN MY ALLOWANCE GOES UP TO \$10?"

© Gary Larson The Far Side



"Python... and he's home."

Non Sequitur



Looking past golf's foremost threesome

BY DOUG FERGUSON
The Associated Press

KAPALUA, Hawaii — There's more to the PGA Tour than the Big Three.

Vijay Singh, Tiger Woods and Ernie Els all appear to be on top of their game, which put some spice into the start of the new season. All had ample opportunity to win the Mercedes Championships against a winners-only field at Kapalua. That the winner turned out to be Stuart Appleby was hardly a surprise. Despite opening with a 74, the 33-year-old Aussie played the final 55 holes without a bogey, closed with a 6-under 67 and became the first repeat champion since the season opener moved from California to Maui in 1999.

"I'm not surprised that somebody other than the Big Three came up and made a statement," Stewart Cink said. "Because everybody can play as well out here."

The focus is at the top of the world ranking going into the 2005, and for good reason.

Singh is coming off a nine-win season during which he rose to No. 1 in the world, and he worked harder than ever during his short break. Woods (No. 2) found his swing late in the year and was the only player to post all four rounds in the 60s at Kapalua. Els (No. 3) is determined to overcome his four close calls last year in the majors.

But Woods gave an intriguing forecast on the eve of the Mercedes Championships.

He said his swing was as good as ever, and that he was capable of being even better than his astounding run five years ago when he captured four straight majors and won nearly half of his tournaments in 2000.

But getting the same results?

"It depends on how well I play," Woods said. "And how well the rest of the guys play."

Indeed, the tour has never been this loaded with talented players. And it might be tougher than ever to collect nine trophies in a season, as Singh did last year and Woods did in 2000.



Vijay Singh's wild hook off the 13th tee Sunday resulted in triple bogey on the hole and prevented him from being a wire-to-wire winner.



Tiger Woods' putter did not cooperate at Kapalua; he averaged 30.5 putts per round, which ranked 15th in the 31-player field.



Ernie Els was a shot out of the lead Sunday on the final hole, a reachable par 5, but lost his tee shot far out of play to the right.



While the top three ranked players in the world flirited with the lead in the final round of the winners-only Mercedes Championships on Sunday, Stuart Appleby (above) won the title for the second straight year.

"I just made nothing," he said. "I don't feel like I got anything out of my rounds."

It all paved the way for Appleby to win for the sixth time on the PGA Tour, then head home to Australia as his wife prepares to deliver their first child on Wednesday.

A year ago, Appleby led by five with five holes to play and had to survive four straight birdies by Singh to win by a shot.

He won this time by staging a rally, although he needed plenty of help.

"There was some pretty serious talent around me, and I had to keep my nose to the grindstone," Appleby said.

Even so, he realizes the Big Three are there for a reason.

"The question is, what's happening? Who are those players? It's obvious the world ranking shows a pretty good gist of what's going on, when Ernie plays his best and what Vijay is like when he plays his best," Appleby said.

"Tiger will play his best again. And so will many other players."

Moss stripped-down play for more attention

BY STEVE WILSTEN
The Associated Press

Randy Moss makes his living with his talent, makes his name with his antics.

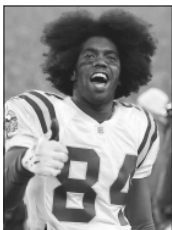
Moss was just being himself when he bent over in the end zone after his second TD catch in Minnesota's 31-17 playoff win Sunday, pretended to strip off his pants, and pantomimed a moonshot at Green Bay fans.

Some took offense, some thought it was amusing, even appropriate, after the way fans had been riding him during the game.

Indianapolis Colts coach Tony Dungy thought it was funny, if not quite right for national television. He thought it was Moss's answer to Green Bay fans, who have a tradition of mooning the visiting team's bus in the parking lot after a game.

Minnesota center Matt Birk, who confronted Moss the previous week about leaving the field with two seconds left in a loss in Washington, didn't consider Moss's latest stunt a team "disrespect" — this time, Birk defended Moss — so it was.

"Brett Favre used to do the



Minnesota's Randy Moss said of his pantomimed mooning of Green Bay fans after scoring a fourth-quarter TD, "Just having a little fun with the boys a little bit."

throat slash. I think that's worse than just a fake moon," Birk said. "But you know, Randy's Randy and Brett's Brett, so Randy gets heat."

Moss surely wasn't the first player to want to moon the fans, but he was the first to do it next to the goal posts in the fourth quarter of a playoff game on national television. He has timing and he's

not camera shy.

The NFL doubtlessly will fine him, perhaps the \$5,000 that disciplinary guidelines provide for the first offense of making "obscene gestures or other actions construed as being in poor taste."

For a man making \$5 million this season, losing 001 off the top must hurt as much as snipping the tips off his Afro. Moss can't buy publicity any cheaper.

"Just having a little fun with the boys a little bit," he said after the game. "I hope I don't get in trouble by it, but if I do I'll take the heat."

Moss certainly can expect to get ragged by Philadelphia fans on Sunday, though he won't have Terrell Owens trying to show him up.

The pseudo-moonshot was a harmless, if crass, prank that by itself is of little consequence. All Moss revealed was his knack for attracting attention, good and bad, just as he has his whole career. Nobody acts the way he does and wears hair so big hoping to go unnoticed.

The problem with Moss's mooning was that it can be one of those little taunts that can turn into something more serious. The rise in player-fan confrontations in American pro sports in recent years reached the point of a

near-riot at the Indiana Pacers-Detroit Pistons game two months ago.

What if insulted Green Bay fans had thrown things at Moss as he jiggled his butt in front of them? Would Moss or his teammates have charged the crowd as Ron Artest did in Detroit after a fan tossed a cup at him?

Vikings tight end Jermaine Wiggins thought Moss was just "having a good time" and responded in kind to fans who had been heckling him nastily.

"If people keep saying so many things to you," Wiggins said, "it's going to come to a point in time where you're just going to say, 'You know what? To hell with this, and I'm going to do what I've got to do.'"

But that's not what a player's got to do. The player's the pro, the one who should act professionally. There's no manhood at stake.

Moss proved his manhood on the field, playing hard start to finish, and he limped off with his two TDs and a sprained ankle. He didn't have to sully the day with the silly stuff.

The NFL has been in a tizzy over anything that smacks of indecency since Janet Jackson's breast-baring "wardrobe malfunction" at the Super Bowl last year.

The league was embarrassed by the risque "Monday Night Football" intro two months ago when "Desperate Housewives" star Nicollette Sheridan tossed away her shower towel and appeared to be nude as she seduced Owens in the locker room before the Eagles-Cowboys game.

Even those of us who weren't particularly offended by either of those incidents have to be grateful to the NFL for sparing us from staring at Mickey Rooney's bare butt in a Super Bowl ad this year. Instead we got Moss's wiggling derriere, happily fully clothed.

Moss has had his share of legal problems off the field but his football transgressions over the years — he once squirted a referee with a water bottle — are piddling stuff, on the order of the nonsense pulled by Owens and New Orleans' Joe Horn. They all got the attention they craved, though not the reputation these superstar wannabes might have wanted.

They would have served themselves better by fashioning themselves after the best in the game. Jerry Rice managed to set virtually every receiving record without once looking like a jerk.

Steve Wilsten is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at: swilsten@ap.org

Commentary

Turn Duce loose, or let Bus drive?

Steelers coach Cowher not saying who will get more carries vs. Jets

BY ALAN ROBINSON

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Bill Cowher needs only look to the New York Jets' sideline to understand how tricky and troublesome it can be deciding how to spend playing time between two productive running backs in the playoffs.

That's why the Pittsburgh Steelers' coach isn't choosing yet between the Duce or the Bus Duce Staley or Jerome Bettis — as his primary running back for Saturday's divisional playoff game in Pittsburgh against the Jets.

Cowher wouldn't speculate when pressed by reporters Monday, cutting short questions about an issue that has already caused

friction with Pittsburgh's opponent.

"We'll see," Cowher said. "They're both going to play. I can't make any predictions right now."

Cowher watched on TV as Jets coach Herman Edwards and running backs coach Bishop Harris had a heated exchange during New York's dramatic, 20-17 overtime victory Saturday night in San Diego. The disagreement may have resulted from Edwards' edict that running back LaMont Jordan become more involved in an offense led by NFL rushing champion Curtis Martin.

If Cowher has set his staff whether Bettis or Staley should get most of the carries, he's not



Pittsburgh Steelers RB Duce Staley, right, started seven games before injuring a hamstring Oct. 31 against New England, during his fourth 100-yard game in five weeks. He has only 41 carries for 123 yards since.

saying — and, almost certainly, not to do publicly. Bettis would seem to be the logical choice given his recent production and Staley's relative lack of carries since the first half of the season.

"When you have two backs, it's not easy to keep them both involved," said Cowher, who was discussing the Jets' situation but also could have been talking about his own. "Sometimes there's a fine line, trying to keep people involved and wanting to get them a feel for the game, but at the same time getting the other guys in."

"It's not always an easy thing to juggle."

Staley started seven games before injuring a hamstring Oct. 31 against New England, during his fourth 100-yard game in five weeks.

He has only 41 carries for 123 yards since, including eight for 21 yards Jan. 2 against Buffalo.

Bettis, used mostly as a goal-line runner early in the sea-

son, responded to Staley's absence with six 100-yard games in six starts. But a sprained ankle kept him out of the Buffalo game and might have hindered him had the Steelers played last week.

Bettis' comeback — the NFL's No. 5 career rusher didn't begin either of the last two seasons as a starter — has been one of the surprising subplots of the Steelers' unexpectedly good 15-1 season.

"He's made a lot of concessions. He's been the ultimate team leader," Cowher said. "He's been very inspirational for this team. ... You're talking about a [potential] Hall of Fame player who became a role player and a great example for a lot of players on this team."

Bettis led the Steelers' 17-6 victory over the Jets on Dec. 12, replacing an ineffective Staley to throw for a touchdown and run for another in the fourth quarter.

The Steelers are 6-0 in Pittsburgh against the Jets and 15-2 overall, losing only during two 5-

Pittsburgh's worst seasons in the last 35 years (1988, 2003). Not that it matters to Cowher, who recalls only how physical and tightly played last month's game was.

The Jets outgained the Steelers 296-262 but couldn't take advantage of two interceptions thrown by rookie quarterback Ben Roethlisberger.

Afterward, as the two coaches shook hands, Cowher said to Edwards, "We'll probably see each other down the road."

"It's going to be a grind just like it was the last time we played them. We know it," Cowher said. "We knew it going in the last time and we didn't feel any differently coming out of it."

The Steelers are in their best shape physically in weeks, with no player listed as any worse than probable. Two defensive starters should return: cornerback Deshaun Townsend, who missed the Buffalo game with a broken hand, and linebacker Clark Haggans, who sat out three games with a sore groin.



Jerome Bettis, who started the season as Duce Staley's backup and was used almost exclusively in goal-line situations early in the season, has rushed for 100 yards in each of his six starts since Staley's injury.



Minnesota Vikings WR Nate Burleson, right, and Philadelphia Eagles cornerback Lito Sheppard chase a pass on Sept. 20 in Philadelphia. The Eagles won the teams' Week 2 meeting 27-16.

Vikings receivers tough test for Eagles

Philadelphia secondary has star power to take on big-play ability of Minnesota's Moss, Burleson

BY ROB MAADDI

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Randy Moss isn't going to intimidate the Philadelphia Eagles' secondary.

Moss, the Minnesota Vikings' star wide receiver, possesses exceptional strength, speed and leaping ability, skills which make him one of the most feared players in the NFL.

But the Eagles have arguably the best defensive backfield in the league, led by All-Pro cornerback Lito Sheppard, All-Pro free safety Brian Dawkins, and Pro Bowl strong safety Michael Lewis.

Cornerback Sheldon Brown also had an outstanding season and Rod Hood is a solid nickelback.

Moss and the rest of the Vikings (9-8) meet the Eagles (13-3) in Sunday's NFC divisional playoff game at Lincoln Financial Field.

It's a rematch of Philadelphia's 27-16 victory over Minnesota in Week 2.

"It's a huge challenge," Lewis said of playing against Moss.

"He can go deep, way past everybody on the field. You have to be aware of where he is on the field. He's a playmaker."

Moss, playing on a sprained right ankle, had four catches for 70 yards and two touchdowns in the Vikings' 31-17 upset over the Packers in Green Bay on Sunday. Nate Burleson also had four receptions for 60 yards and one TD.

At 6 feet 4, Moss has nearly a half-foot advantage over Sheppard and Brown, both generously listed at 5 feet 10.

But in Philadelphia's victory against Minnesota four months ago, Moss was held to 69 yards on eight catches. He had a 7-yard TD catch late in the fourth quarter after the outcome had been decided.

"We were decent that game," Brown said. "The thing now that we've been playing together for some time. Communication is the key. It's not one-on-one coverage. We have to play well as a unit, and we need Devon [Kearse] and the other guys up front to get a good rush."

Eagles defensive coordinator Jim Johnson didn't allow his scheme to defend Moss in the first meeting, leaving Brown on the right side and Sheppard on the left. At times, Hood was matched up against Moss one-on-one.

"It says a lot that Jim has confidence in me to cover him," Hood said. "He's a tough receiver, very fast, a great receiver and he adjusts to the ball. I love playing against the best. I look forward to the challenge."

Sheppard, a first-round pick in 2002, and Brown, a second-round selection that year, silenced critics in their first year replacing

five-time Pro Bowl cornerback Troy Vincent and nine-year starter Bobby Taylor.

Sheppard and Brown anchored a secondary that allowed 16 TDs and gave up 200.8 yards passing per game, an impressive feat considering the Eagles won nine games by double-digit margins, meaning teams had to throw often against them.

"We're on an elevator," Sheppard said. "We're on the 17th floor now. We're going to go three floors to go. Until we get to our peak, we're still getting better."

While Moss draws most of the attention, the Eagles realize they have to be wary of Burleson, who caught 68 passes for 1,006 yards and nine TDs this season. Moss had 49 receptions for 767 yards and 13 TDs in an injury-plagued season in which he missed five games.

"The biggest difference from last game is Burleson," Brown said. "He's playing with confidence."



Green Bay Packers head coach Mike Sherman watches the final seconds of his team's 31-17 loss to the Minnesota Vikings in their NFC wild-card game on Sunday in Green Bay, Wis. Sherman will face many personnel decisions after watching his injury-plagued team give up several big plays against the Vikings.

Packers likely to look different regardless of Favre's decision

Beefing up defense sure to be a priority in offseason

BY ARNIE STAPLETON

The Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Even if Brett Favre returns for a 15th NFL season, the Green Bay Packers expect a different look next season.

Tight end Bubba Franks, guard Marco Rivera, linebacker Hannibal Naves, and punter Bryan Barker are unrestricted free agents.

Other free agents include Najeh Davenport, tackle Kevin Barry, defensive end Aaron Kampman, linebacker Paris Lenon, backup quarterback Craig Nall and No. 3 quarterback J.T. O'Sullivan. Guard Mike Wahle has a \$6 million bonus due in March if he's kept around.

And some expect first-year defensive coordinator Bob Slowik to be gone.

The biggest question for the Packers as they head into the offseason after Sunday's 31-17 first-round playoff loss to the Minnesota Vikings, though, is clearly this: Will Favre retire?

"It would be easy to walk off the field after that game and say, 'I've had enough,'" the 31-year-old Favre said. "But I'm going to try to be as fair to myself and to this team as possible. I've had a lot of great games. This obviously was not one of them."

"But I can't base my decision on this game."

Favre lost his father and brother-in-law in the last 13 months, and his wife is battling breast cancer. He plans to get away for a few weeks to clear his head and decide whether or not he's finished with football.

Favre doesn't need to prove anything else on the field. There's not much more he can go through off the field, kicker Ryan Longwell said. "So, either way, I think he'd be entirely justified with either decision."

The team's season ended just



First and foremost on the minds of the Packers is the future of QB Brett Favre, who is contemplating retirement after throwing four interceptions in the loss to the Vikings, only the second home playoff defeat in franchise history.

like it started: with a stumbling young defense and an injury-slowed offense.

The Packers became just the ninth team in NFL history to reach the postseason after starting 1-4, and they looked primed to go far in the playoffs in the run-of-the-mill NFC, coming in on a conference-best 9-2 run.

But the same problems that haunted them in September doomed them in their loss to Minnesota: poor tackling, bad communication, busted assignments, too takeaways and too many turnovers and penalties.

"It's kind of the story of our season," safety Darren Sharper said. "And it all comes back to bite you in the playoffs."

Favre just couldn't keep up with Minnesota's big-play offense when he lost Pro Bowl receiver Javon Walker to a bruised shin in the second quarter.

He already didn't have Robert Ferguson, who hasn't played since a clothesline hit Dec. 19, so

when the Vikings double-teamed Donald Driver, Favre was reduced to throwing to kick returner Antonio Chatman and Andre Thurman, fresh off the practice squad.

Plus, Favre's offensive line had to be shuffled after left tackle Chad Clifton hurt his ankle in the third quarter.

Cowboy Mike Sherman has some tough decisions to ponder, too.

Last year, he made defensive coordinator Ed Donatelli the scapegoat for the Packers' fourth- and 26th place at Philadelphia and many fans expect Sherman to fire Slowik.

Sherman, however, didn't provide Slowik with capable players by drafting Ahmad Carroll and Joey Thomas after cornerback Mike McKenzie demanded a trade, which he got in October.

Sharper injured a knee against Dallas in Week 7 and was never himself again. Sumo-sized nose tackle Grady Jackson missed five weeks after dislocating a kneecap and wasn't the same after rushing his return. He said he'll have surgery in two weeks.

The Packers were alternately terrible at defending the pass and the run. One week, their rookies couldn't handle zone defense and the next their veterans got burned in man coverage.

And they sorely missed center Mike Flanagan, who underwent season-ending knee surgery a month into the season. Running backs Ahmad Green and Davenport played hurt.

Although the Packers racked up franchise records in total yards (6,357) and net yards passing (4,449), Favre couldn't make up for a defense that ranked 28th in the league.

The Packers finished 4-5 at Lambeau Field, their first losing home record since 1991. And they fell to 14-2 at home in the playoffs, both losses came in the last three seasons.

Shanahan believes team is among best

Despite finish, Broncos coach puts stock in team's NFL ranking on offense, defense

BY EDDIE PELLIS

The Associated Press

DENVER — Mike Shanahan has a much different vision of the Denver Broncos than most people who watched his team this season.

The coach believes the Broncos are close to being among the NFL elite. He believes Jake Plummer is an excellent quarterback. And he doesn't believe his power within the team is as all-encompassing as many people might think.

Add it all up and it's logical not to expect many drastic changes in 2005 — either on the roster or in the hierarchy — from a team that has finished the last two seasons in identical fashion, with 10-7 records and blowout losses to Indianapolis in the first round of the playoffs.

"I think we were there this year," Shanahan said during a 55-minute news conference to recap the season.

"You don't finish fourth on defense and fifth on offense without being pretty good."

That's what they were — pretty good.

But as they showed in the 49-24 loss to the Colts, they're nowhere near as good as the third-seeded Tennessee Titans in the AFC.

To many that might indicate retooling is in order. On the day after, though, Shanahan spoke as if it's a matter of just a few tweaks and the return to health of a few key players, like Trevor Pryce. Pryce bought that line of thinking, too.

"No one should look at this as something you need to tear down and start over again," he said. "We're a good football team. We have a nucleus of guys."

But there were flaws.

Missing Pryce, Denver's defensive news, found a consistent pass rush. But he didn't help new acquisitions Champ Bailey and John Lynch, who were brought in to make the defense better, but couldn't — and didn't — do it. Denver finished with 38 sacks and 20 turnovers and, on the whole, simply didn't make big plays.

"We were brought in to bring this team further along than what it was last year," Lynch said.

"I think in terms of making this a better team, I think we have done that. But we didn't move them on further in the playoffs."

Meanwhile, with Plummer running the offense, it was hard to know what to expect. Was he the guy who tied the team record with 27 touchdown passes? Or the guy who threw a league-high 20 interceptions? He was a little bit of both — great at times, but very inconsistent and not a good decision maker.

Shanahan, however, is in love with his quarterback. He spent a good five minutes praising him Monday. The Broncos must pay him \$6 million on March 1 to keep him under his current con-



Denver Broncos coach Mike Shanahan has only praise for QB Jake Plummer, above, who threw a team-record-tying 27 TDs and a league-high 20 interceptions.

tract, and Shanahan said that was all but a done deal.

"He handled pressure extremely well and that's what quarterbacks are asked to do," Shanahan said. "He had one stretch of four games, there were eight interceptions, where he didn't play well. I'd like to throw those games out, but I blame myself as much as Jake because I put him in situations he shouldn't have been in."

Shanahan denied that wearing the hats as head coach and top personnel guy is too much for him to handle, as many — including a handful of former players — suggested over the season.

"The only way you have a great organization is if you've got great people at every position," Shanahan said. "I'm talking about college personnel, pro personnel, general manager, and without those people you don't succeed. It's been that way since I've been here."

It means that barring a change of heart by owner Pat Bowlen, Shanahan will likely return for his 11th season. He's got a key decision maker, earning \$5 million a year to lead a team that hasn't won a playoff game since the 1998 Super Bowl.

Among the few agents he'd most like to keep are defensive end Reggie Hayward (10½ sacks), safety Kenen Kennedy and offensive linemen Ben Hamilton.

The salary cap will probably restrict his ability to make more than one or two decent-sized signings from outside and the Bailey-Clanton-Pryce trade was supposed to transform Denver into a Super Bowl contender. Was certainly a rarity, the likes of which almost surely won't be repeated soon.

Shanahan, though, didn't sound like a coach looking for an offseason blockbuster — only a few tweaks and a little more luck on the injury front.

"The bottom line is, you either get it done or you don't," he said. "But for people to say we're a long way from playing at that level, with some of the guys we didn't have and were counting on, they don't know what they're talking about."

Brees wants commitment; Chargers mmm

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Drew Brees wants a little loyalty and commitment from the San Diego Chargers.

"I think the organization knows how I feel. I think I've made that known that I want to be here, and I want a long-term contract," the Pro Bowl quarterback said Monday after the Chargers held their final team meeting. "So really now, it kind of falls in their court. It's up to them to decide what they want to do."

The Chargers lost 20-17 in overtime to the New York Jets in a home wild-card game.

Brees has reached the end of his four-year contract. Many people think the Chargers will put the "franchise" tag on him and give him a \$9 million contract. Then, they can either trade him or let him compete for the starting job with Philip Rivers, who they got in a draft-day trade to be their quarterback of the future.

The Chargers, who went 12-4, are expected to have \$21 million available under the salary cap.

"The Chargers aren't in a hurry to decide Brees' fate."

"I won't talk about our football business," General Manager A.J. Smith said Monday. "I haven't a clue right now. Three weeks from now, we'll huddle up and go over our players and options."

Coach Marty Schottenheimer was given several chances Monday to give Brees a vote of confidence during his final news conference but chose not to.

"I don't really want to get into this at this point," Schottenheimer said. "We'll sit down and we'll talk about all of the variables that influence decisions like that. When you're expecting to continue on in the offseason and it ends abruptly, I think it's best that you not try to make any major decisions at that point."

Marino, young among 15 final finalists

CANTON, Ohio — Quarterbacks Dan Marino and Steve Young and wide receiver Michael Irvin were among 15 finalists for the Pro Football Hall of Fame announced Tuesday.

Marino, who holds many of the NFL's career passing records, and Young, who led San Francisco to the 1994 NFL title, were among four finalists who made the list in their first year of eligibility.

The others were Irvin, a member of the Dallas teams that won three Super Bowls between 1992 and 1995, and the late Derrick Thomas, who played for Kansas City and died in 2000 of injuries suffered in an auto accident.

Two of the finalists had already been determined — senior nominees Fritz Pollard and Benny Friedman.

Pollard, who played in the 1920s, also was the first black to coach an NFL team. Friedman played for several teams between 1927 and 1934.

The other nominees were linebacker Harry Carson, who played for the New York Giants in the 1970s and 1980s and was a member of the 1986 NFL champions; defensive end Richard Dent, the MVP for the Chicago Bears in the Super Bowl following the 1985 season; defensive end L.C. Greenwood, a member of Pittsburgh's "Steel Curtain" teams of the 1970s; guard Russ Grimm, a member of Washington's famed "Hogs" defensive end Claude Humphrey, who played for Washington and Philadelphia between 1968-81; guard Bob Kuechenberg, who played on Miami's 1972 undefeated champions, wide receiver Art Monk, a member of three Super Bowl winners with Washington; Roger Wehrli, a cornerback for the St. Louis Cardinals from 1969-82; and the late George Young, who built two Super Bowl winners as general manager of the Giants.

Browns interview Robiskie; 49ers also searching for new coach

CLEVELAND — Browns interim coach Terry Robiskie met with team owner Randy Lerner, president John Collins and general manager Butch Davis in New York on Monday to interview for the position that became open when Butch Davis resigned.



Quarterback Drew Brees said he would like to remain with the Chargers, who were noncommittal.

Robiskie has the backing of the players, but Cleveland went 4-12 this season and struggled on offense with Robiskie as coordinator.

The Browns lost four straight after Robiskie took over for Davis, but he inspired the players to win the final game of the season and snap a nine-game losing streak.

Robiskie is the fourth candidate interviewed by the Browns, joining New England defensive coordinator Romeo Crennel, Philadelphia offensive coordinator Brad Childress and Pittsburgh offensive line coach Russ Grimm.

The other three candidates are still working for their teams in the playoffs, which could delay a decision.

The Browns could find themselves in competition with San Francisco for a coach. The 49ers fired coach Dennis Erickson and dismissed general manager Terry Donahue last week. 49ers owner John W. Henry interviewed Crennel in Boston on Saturday, with both sides saying the conversation went well.

The 49ers plan to interview Tennessee Titans offensive coordinator Mike Heimerdinger and Tim Lewis, defensive coordinator for the New York Giants, a San Francisco spokesman said Monday.

Browns spokeswoman Lisa Levine said the team also plans interviews Tuesday with former Miami Dolphins interim coach and defensive coordinator Jim Bates and Baltimore Ravens defensive coordinator Mike Nolan.

Bates said Monday he'll seek work elsewhere rather than remain with the team as an assistant to new coach Nick Saban.

Vikings worried about Williams' ankle

EIDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. — Minnesota Vikings running back Moe Williams might have to miss this weekend's playoff game at Philadelphia with a sprained right ankle.

Randy Moss has the same injury, also aggravated during Sunday's win at Green Bay, but his isn't as serious and the wide receiver is expected to play against the Eagles.

"The only one I'm really concerned about is Moe," coach Mike Tice said.

Williams, who has been a clutch runner and receiver while playing mostly on third downs, would be missed most in pass protection against a Philadelphia defense that blitzes effectively and often.

Abraham questionable for Steelers game

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. — Jets defensive end John Abraham is questionable for Saturday's playoff game against the Pittsburgh Steelers with a sprained right knee.

Coach Herman Edwards said Abraham is still sore and would make a game-time decision on the status of his Pro Bowl player. Abraham was initially listed as probable to start the week after missing his first straight game with the injury. Last week, Abraham said he needed to weigh his options when deciding whether to play because of his impending free agency.

Though Abraham is sore, Edwards expects him to participate when the team returns to practice Wednesday.

Colts uncertain about Mathis' availability

INDIANAPOLIS — Indianapolis Colts defensive end Robert Mathis could miss Sunday's playoff game against New England with a sprained knee. Mathis had a career-high 10½ sacks this season, second on the Colts to Dwight Freeney, who led the NFL with 16.

Virginia Tech Miller to enter NFL Draft

The Associated Press

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — All-American Heath Miller of Virginia Tech, who rewrote the ACC record book for tight ends in only three years, is giving up his final season of eligibility to enter the NFL Draft.

"This has been a very difficult decision for me," Miller said in a statement Monday. "However, I believe I am prepared as a player and as a person to enter the 2005 NFL Draft."

Temple quarterback Walter Snavely and Mississippi center Chris Spencer also will leave school early to enter the NFL Draft.

Vanderbilt quarterback Jay Cutler said he will return for his senior season.

The 6-foot-5, 255-pound Miller led the Atlantic Coast Conference in receptions by a tight end in each of his three seasons, highlighted by 70 catches for 823 yards and six touchdowns in 2003. This season, he had 41 catches for 541 yards and five touchdowns.

For his career, Miller set ACC records for tight ends with 144 receptions, 1,703 receiving yards and 14 touchdowns.

Washington, a second-team All-Big East selection, ran for 15 touchdowns during his junior season and led the conference in total offense with 3,096 yards. He finished fourth on Temple's career list in total yards (4,940), and in yards per passing (3,472) and 12th in rushing (1,468).

Savoy, the second-leading receiver in Utah's 12-0 season, is expected to be drafted, according to The Salt Lake Tribune. "We're going," Savoy told the newspaper.

"My decision isn't much of a surprise," he said before the Utes' 37-7 win over Pittsburgh in the Fiesta Bowl that he was considering the move and would decide after the season. Savoy said if junior quarterback Alex Smith stayed, he might as well.

Report: Syracuse to hire former NFL coordinator

By JOHN KERIKS

The Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Texas co-defensive coordinator Greg Robinson will be named the new coach at Syracuse University as Texas sources told The Associated Press.

Syracuse athletic director Daryl Gross scheduled a news conference for Tuesday afternoon to make the announcement.

The source, who asked to remain anonymous, said Robinson was en route from Austin, Texas, to Syracuse for the announcement. The move was first reported Monday by The Dallas Morning News.

Robinson, 33, spent 14 seasons in the NFL, including stints as defensive coordinator with Kansas City and Denver. He succeeds Paul Pasqualoni, who was fired

Smith announced last week that he was entering the April draft.

Savoy had 67 catches for 961 yards and 11 touchdowns as a sophomore. He is eligible to enter the draft because he has been out of high school for three years.

Spencer, a 6-foot-4, 310-pound junior, was a two-year starter and an honorable mention selection to the Associated Press all-SEC team. He said he was projected as a second-round pick in the draft.

"This was a tough decision, but one I felt I needed to make after getting the facts from the NFL," Spencer said. "I'll miss my teammates, but Ole Miss will always be a part of me."

Cutler was 147-40-24 for 1,844 yards and 10 touchdowns with five interceptions. He also ran 109 times for 349 yards and six TDs.

"I want to be here another year," he said. "I love my teammates dearly. There was never any changing. There just wasn't enough to convince me to leave."

Cutler said he decided not to make a quick decision after the Commodores' 2-9 season. He received and made some of us real-time evaluation from the NFL on where he might be drafted but wouldn't discuss details.

Cutler was among the Commodores who attended the funeral of running back Kwame Doster in Tampa, Fla., on Dec. 31.

"This death, it brought us even closer and made some of us realize how important this team is and how much we really put into this stuff," Cutler said.

Robinson, 43, was entering the draft while California quarterback Aaron Rodgers, Louisville running back Eric Shelton, the Florida State cornerback Clint Ciatrick Pason and linebacker Channing Crowder, and Georgia safety Thomas Davis.

Underclassmen have until Jan. 15 to declare for the draft and have until Jan. 15 to withdraw their names.

Report: Syracuse to hire former NFL coordinator

Dec. 29, eight days after Syracuse lost to Georgia Tech 14-14 in the Champs Sports Bowl.

Pasqualoni was 107-59-1 and 6-3 in bowl games at Syracuse, but the Orange struggled to break even the past three years after going 10-3 and finishing 14th in the nation in 2001.

After becoming athletic director in December, Gross said he would seek a defensive-minded coach, and Robinson made a big impact in his one year at Texas, even the past three years after going 10-3 and finishing 14th in the nation in 2001.

During the regular season, the Longhorns allowed 102 fewer points than they gave up in 12 games last season, did not allow a third-quarter touchdown, and held opponents to just a 27 percent conversion rate on third downs.

AP Sports Writer Jim Vortaro in Austin, Texas, contributed to this report.

Bees lifts Lakers over Timberwolves

The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Both superstars began the fourth quarter on the bench. Kobe Bryant just got more help from his teammates than Kevin Garnett.

Bryant scored 31 points, but the Los Angeles Lakers rallied while the Minnesota Timberwolves 105-96 on Monday night.

Watching the comeback, Bryant was taunted by a Timberwolves fan who insisted he wasn't needed. The NBA's second-leading scorer simply turned his back and pumped his fist in approval.

"It felt great to see them like that, executing, playing together like a unit," Bryant said. "Stepping up, making big shots, making great plays."

Garnett scored 23 points, grabbed 13 rebounds and dished out seven assists for struggling Minnesota, which led by 16 points late in the first half and by nine to start the final quarter. Of their Timberwolves have lost 10 of their past 14 games.

"We've got to figure something out," Garnett said. "Superman is not going to walk through that door."

Chuck Atkins had 23 points, seven rebounds and seven assists, and Chris Mihm had 14 points to go with 17 rebounds for the Lakers.

They went 16-for-35 from three-point range, one short of the franchise record for both at halftime making one shot. The advantage nearly every time a Timberwolves defender was slow to rotate on the perimeter.

"Our bench, we're expected to produce when we come in," reserve forward Brian Cook said. "We're a tight group, and we know we have to pick it up energy-wise, defensive-wise."

A running jumper just before the third-quarter buzzer by Atkins cut Minnesota's lead to 76-67, and Bryant — who had played every minute to that point — began the fourth on the bench.

The Lakers went on a 24-7 run without him that included five three-pointers, two each by Cook and Jumaane Jones, for a 91-83 ad-



Roundup

vantage with less than five minutes remaining.

Bryant — who scored 16 of his team's first 23 points — then returned. With the Lakers up by five, he swished a long three-pointer from the left wing to make it 96-88 with 1:44 on the clock.

On the previous possession, Wally Szczerbiak — who had 12 points — missed a three-pointer that would've cut the lead to two.

Jazz 97, Spurs 96: At Salt Lake City, Mehmet Okur's putback in the final second gave the Jazz their first win over San Antonio in nearly five years and ended Utah's nine-game losing streak.

Okur, who finished with 23 points and 11 rebounds, pulled down the ball after Keith McLeod missed a layup and banked it in as time expired and the home fans roared.

Tim Duncan led the Spurs with 24 points and 13 rebounds.

Celtics 119, Magic 101: At Boston, Tony Allen led Boston's backups on a 14-point run in the second quarter of the Celtics' victory over Orlando.

Bulls 94, Warriors 85: At Chicago, Thella Harrington scored a season-high 20 points and Kirk Hinrich had 14 points and nine assists to lead the Bulls to their fourth straight victory.

The Warriors have lost six straight since Jason Richardson sprained his left ankle in practice on Dec. 31.

Trail Blazers 109, 76ers 100: At Philadelphia, Nick Van Exel made a team-record eighth three-pointers and scored a season-high 28 points, and Damon Stoudamire added 22 to help Portland snap a four-game losing streak.

Allen Iverson had 21 points with nine assists and nine rebounds for Philadelphia, but crashed hard while driving to the basket early in the fourth. He was fouled out of the game and fouled out of the game.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
New York	17	50	GB
Washington	19	48	1 1/2
Philadelphia	18	45	1 1/2
Toronto	13	37	10 1/2
New Jersey	12	36	14 1/2

Southeast Division			
Miami	27	73	GB
Orlando	19	54	7 1/2
Charlotte	18	54	7 1/2
Atlanta	12	40	15 1/2

Central Division			
Cleveland	20	62	1 1/2
San Antonio	14	56	7 1/2
Indiana	16	50	10 1/2
New Orleans	14	48	12 1/2
Milwaukee	12	38	17 1/2

Western Conference

Southwest Division			
San Antonio	20	68	GB
Dallas	18	57	4 1/2
Memphis	17	50	10 1/2
New Orleans	14	48	12 1/2

Northwest Division			
Seattle	24	75	GB
Minnesota	17	61	7 1/2
Portland	14	53	10 1/2
Denver	12	43	16 1/2

Pacific Division			
Phoenix	24	82	GB
Sacramento	21	65	8 1/2
Golden State	19	65	8 1/2
LA Clippers	16	50	13 1/2
Utah	13	44	19 1/2

Monday's games

Portland 100, Philadelphia 100	LA Lakers 105, Minnesota 96
New Orleans 91, Dallas 88	Utah 97, San Antonio 96

Tuesday's games

Charlotte at Cleveland	Milwaukee at New York
Detroit at New Jersey	Indiana at Memphis
San Antonio at Seattle	Denver at Sacramento

Wednesday's games

Portland at Washington	Orlando at Boston
Orlando at Minnesota	Atlanta at Chicago
Milwaukee at Denver	Phoenix at Utah
LA Lakers at Houston	Houston at Dallas
Utah at Sacramento	Seattle at LA Clippers

Thursday's games

New Jersey at Houston	Utah at Sacramento
Cleveland at LA Lakers	

Monday

Trail Blazers 109, 76ers 100			
Portland	Astute	Portland 7-17 31.8	Blondell
Trail Blazers 109, 76ers 100	Portland 7-17 31.8	Blondell	

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Portland 109, 76ers 100			
Portland 109, 76ers 100	Portland 7-17 31.8	Blondell	
Portland 109, 76ers 100	Portland 7-17 31.8	Blondell	

Celtics 119, Magic 101

Orlando	19	54	7 1/2
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Boehman wins 300th in Big East

The Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Notre Dame got off to a great start in the second half against Syracuse.

After making four of their first five shots after halftime, the Irish were held to three field goals over the next 16 minutes as the seventh-ranked Orange took the lead in a 70-61 victory Monday night, making Jim

Boehm the first coach to get 300 Big East wins.

"On a night when we really struggled on offense, I thought our defense was tremendous, especially down the stretch," Boehm said. "The defense was really the key."

Notre Dame (10-3, 2-1) was 0-for-7 from the field with one turnover during Syracuse's decisive 14-0 run.

The Irish led 57-51 before Josh Pace scored six points during the second-half spur as Syracuse repeated its comeback inside. Pace, who finished with 10 points, capped it with a 10-foot jumper and Hakim Warrick, who was sitting with four fouls when the run began, added four of his 12 points during the surge, including a dunk on an alley-oop pass from Billy Edelin.

Gerry McNamara, who had 22 points to lead the Orange, agreed with his coach that defense was the key.

"They are a great shooting team, but we have to fight them in the zone where we really improve," said McNamara, who sealed the victory with a three-pointer with 65 seconds left.

Boehm's 300th straight win for the Orange (16-1, 3-0) in their first game this season outside the state of New York. Boehm was upset that so much was made about that, saying a trip to New York City, where as much of a road trip as some other games played.

The best teams are going to show up in the end of the season. It's foolish to go out and play an impossible schedule," he said.

The underdog Notre Dame's winning streak at six and prevented the Irish from going 3-0 in the league for the first time.

Boehm has a 300-161 record in his 26th season in the conference. John Thompson, who coached at Georgetown for 20 seasons, is second on the list with 231 wins. Jim Calhoun, in his 19th season at Connecticut, is second among active coaches with 221.

No. 2, Oklahoma 77, No. 12 Connecticut 65: Taj Gray scored 23 points and Lawrence McKenzie added 18 for the host Sooners (12-2), who beat the defending national champion for the third time in four seasons.

Marcus Williams had 16 points to lead Connecticut (9-3), while Corey Johnson added 13 points and 14 rebounds.

Connecticut, which leads the nation with a plus-17.6 rebound margin, finished with a 42-39 advantage on the boards during the first time this season Oklahoma won while getting outbounded.

Kings Trade Christie to Magic for Mobley, Bradley

The Associated Press

The Sacramento Kings traded Doug Christie to the Orlando Magic for Cuttino Mobley on Monday in a swap of starting shooting guards.

The Kings, who also acquired injured forward Michael Bradley, gave up their best defender and a team leader to add another stand-out player to their lineup. Mobley averaged 16 points, 27 rebounds and 18 assists in 23 games from Houston along with Steve Francis last summer in the seven-player trade involving Tracy McGrady.

The Houston Rockets drafted Mobley in the second round in

1998 out of Rhode Island. He has averaged 17 points per game in seven seasons, including a career-best 21.7 in 2001-02 with the Rockets.

Christie, a 13-year veteran, has been a durable, dependable leader during five seasons with the Kings. He is averaging 7.3 points per game, 3.8 rebounds and 18 assists with 41 rebounds while starting all 31 games.

In eight games with the Magic, Bradley is averaging 0.8 points and 18 rebounds in 6.9 minutes per game. The four-year veteran, who's on the injured list with a

strained right hamstring, also has been a reserve for Toronto and Atlanta.

The Kings played forward Eric Daniels on the injured list to make room for his new additions.

Cavs' Wagner hospitalized; Jackson out with herniated disc:

CLEVELAND — Cavaliers guard Dajuan Wagner is in the hospital after missing the past two games with a herniated disc. Wagner was treated Monday at the Cleveland Clinic for dehydration and gastroenteritis, the latest in a series of medical problems that have plagued since he joined Cleveland.

He missed 35 games as rookie during the 2002-03 season, includ-

ing his first 14 because of surgery for a bladder infection.

Last season, Wagner had an inflamed liver and pancreas that delayed knee surgery. He played in just 44 games.

Wagner has participated in only 11 games this season, averaging four points and shooting just 33 percent from the field.

The Cavaliers could lose rookie guard Luke Jackson for the season because of knee surgery, a problem diagnosed as a herniated disc. Jackson, the No. 10 overall pick in the draft, has been the injured list with back spasms.

He was injured just 43 minutes this season. The Cavaliers declined to make him available for interviews after practice Monday.

Spurs, Suns set pace for rest of the NBA

BY MARK HEISLER

Los Angeles Times

Let's see, Ron Artest went into the crowd and then there was that thing between Kobe Bryant and Karl Malone and, of course, it took a month to get ready for the Christmas Day game.

Nevertheless, I have a nagging feeling there's something I haven't covered. ...

Well, there is the 2004-05 season. For you diehards who follow basketball, here's how everyone is doing:

1. SAN ANTONIO — After bagging Tony Parker and Manu Ginobili, R.C. Buford, the game's most underrated general manager got another gem, Beno Udrih. With their Foreign Legion backcourt, Devin Brown and Brent Barry, they can score now too.

2. PHOENIX — Mike D'Antoni is the first coach to go small, athletic and exciting and turn it around, so root for this to work. Everyone thought Steve Nash would take them from 29 wins to maybe 35 or 40, but they're on pace for 72. Amare Stoudemire has taken it to another level.

3. MIAMI — Dwyane Wade isn't as good as Bryant, but he's more efficient, he's not hung up and he's perfect for Shaquille O'Neal. The Heat were 5-3 when coach Stan Van Gundy put in

Commentary

three-point ace Damon Jones and moved Eddie Jones to forward, and 22-5 season. Shaq is finally healthy, has turned it up since Jan. 1 but can take his usual nap, and they'd still win the East.

4. SEATTLE — They don't belong this high, but someone has to go here. Disaster loomed with Ray Allen and coach Nate McMillan unsigned, but squat power forwards Danny Fortson and Reggie Evans took over inside so 6-10 Rashard Lewis and 6-10 Vladimir Radmanovic could stay outside. The old rule — live by the three, die by the three — is kicking in. They're 6-5 since their 17-3 start.

5. SACRAMENTO — Bobby Jackson's out on the sidelines and their old depth is a memory. However, Chris Webber, all but written off after limping back last season, has learned how to play on the ground and is better than ever.

6. DALLAS — Don Nelson's Fun Bunch still gets 101 a game without Nash even if Mark Cuban is surprised to learn point guard is a problem. With little improving Dirk Nowitzki, revived Jerry Stackhouse, Michael Finley, Jason Terry and Josh Howard, firepower isn't.

7. CLEVELAND — LeBron James, who just turned 20, is on MVP-contender pace (25 points, 7.2 assists, 7.0 rebounds), and his head still looks as if it's on straight. "Last year, he couldn't shoot," says a coach. "Now he's an unbelievable shooter. He must have really done a lot of work. If you had to choose one player, it would be him, just on total package, and second would be Wade." The biggest start is their record (20-9 after an 0-3 start), because after Jeff McInnis, Drew Gooden and Zydrunas Ilgauskas, there's nothing else.

8. DETROIT — They should be higher, but I don't think Larry Brown is planning on settling in Michigan.

9. INDIANA — They were the real deal until Artest lost it. On the bright side, Jamal Tinsley has become a real point guard, and there's always next season.

10. MINNESOTA — Kevin Garnett's leadership used to suffice, but Sam Cassell and Latrell Sprewell are putting about contracts, Troy Hudson about playing time, and they're always upset that Wally Szczerbiak shoots so much. Coach Flip Saunders, highly rated by insiders, is taking heat, but this isn't his fault.

11. WASHINGTON — Another surprising wave in the offensive revolution. Antwan Jamison finally has the right situation, surrounded by good young players (Gilbert Arenas, Larry Hughes, Jarvis Hayes, Jared Jeffries). Jamison, Arenas and Hughes are all averaging 20. The last time that happened was in 1988, when Dale Ellis, Xavier McDaniel and Tom Chambers did it in Seattle.

12. ORLANDO — Johnny Davis continues the Doc Rivers tradition of not guarding anyone, but with Steve Francis, Grant Hill, and Dwight Howard, the Magic score 102 points a game. Francis now refers to himself in the third person by his new nickname "Steve-O" and still won't give up the ball. Howard looks to be a monster, but it's way early.

13. MEMPHIS — Jerry West does it yet again. Mike Prattley is 12-7 since taking over as coach. With his minutes going up, Pau Gasol is averaging 20 points since Fratello's arrival.

14. LOS ANGELES LAKERS — Actually, I don't remember people writing them off. This is where everyone picked them.

The more Bryant years to get them over the top, the more he keeps the ball and the harder he makes the game. The really bad news is, even if he gets it exactly right and Lamar Odom goes back to what he was last season, they're not in the top four in the West. If the Timberwolves straighten themselves out or get Jason Kidd and the Kings get Jackson back, it's not particularly close.

15. HOUSTON — They were old, slow and thin before trading two players for David Wesley. Yao Ming isn't the next Shaq, but

he and Tracy McGrady are still good. Jeff Van Gundy knows what he's doing, even if he's so gloomy that you don't trust him near sharp objects. Since starting 6-11, they're 10-6.

16. PHILADELPHIA — Another stunner: Allen Iverson's assists and shooting percentage are at seven-year highs. Coach Jim O'Brien wisely up, putting 7-0 Samuel Dalembert back in, even if he doesn't know what "rotate" means, and let Kenny Thomas out of the doghouse. With super-athlete Andre Iguodala and three-point ace Kyle Korver, they're moving (9-5 after a 6-12 start).

17. LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS — This is remarkable since the only guards left from the opening-night roster are Rick Brunson and Quinton Ross. Two words: Michael Redd.

18. PORTLAND — Shareef Abdur-Rahim learned to play with Zach Randolph, but Derek Anderson is shooting 41 percent. Damon Stoudamire 35 percent and Nick Van Exel 36 percent. Abdur-Rahim's contract is expiring, making him attractive, and Van Exel is up in 2006, so they have money.

19. DENVER — Carmelo Anthony's head is spinning like the little girl's in "The Exorcist." Andre Miller isn't a fastbreak guard and losing shooter Voshon Lenard hurt. Jeff Biedelick was doomed — ask Anthony about that — and Michael Cooper isn't guaranteed anything. On the plus side, 6-10, 260-pound physical prodigy Nene may finally be happening.

20. NEW YORK — Stephen Marbury has gone back to scoring, and it's only the East. Before Jamal Crawford went out, he and Marbury were so clueless together, it was entertaining.

21. CHICAGO — At 2-13, they were doing their war dance, getting ready to trade Eddy Curry and/or Tyson Chandler when they noticed they were playing pretty well. Ben Gordon is averaging 17 points, shooting 50 percent from the field and 53 percent on three-point attempts since Thanksgiving. If they hadn't traded Jalen Rose, they'd make the playoffs standing on their heads. They've just gone 10-5.

22. NEW JERSEY — If this wasn't such a lame-duck operation, you'd like Kidd, Vinny Carter and Richard Jefferson. The question is do they trade Kidd now, in the summer or persuade him to stay?

23. BOSTON — Rivers is reining in Paul Pierce, no easy task after years of doing whatever he wanted. Rookies Al Jefferson and Tony Allen have promise, but any future is a ways off.

24. UTAH — Nice rebuilding program with Carlos Boozer averaging 20-10. Losing Andrei Kirilenko, who averaged an amazing 4-4 in 1999, was devastating. Over two seasons they're 50-42 with him, 3-20 without.



San Antonio Spurs' Tim Duncan (21) drives to the basket over Denver Nuggets defender Nene (31) as Kenyon Martin (6) and Marcus Camby (23) watch.

25. GOLDEN STATE — The major issue is still management. New general manager Chris Mullin has some promising players in search of a direction but needs a star. Former GM Gary St. Jean's old nucleus of Jamison, Hughes and Arenas is happening in Washington.

26. CHARLOTTE — Expectations were 10 to 15 wins but they're on pace for 20 with Eneke Okafor averaging 17-11 since Thanksgiving. With four players signed during this season, Coach/GM Bernie Bickerstaff can wheel and deal.

27. MILWAUKEE — This is what everyone expected last season. Can't defend big guys, and there are more in the East now. After Jermaine O'Neal hit them for 55 in 36 minutes, Reggie Miller said, "That was the easiest 55 I ever saw."

28. TORONTO — Had to move Carter, who'd quit, but despite what Branch Rickey said, you don't always gain by subtraction.

29. NEW ORLEANS — Everything that could go wrong did and with Jamal Mashburn gone and Baron Davis eyeing the door, that was a lot. They're reconciled to moving Davis, with General Manager Allan Bristow noting, "It's our job to talk."

30. ATLANTA — They should change the name to Atlantis. They disappeared a few years back and haven't been seen since. Now they have Al Harrington, Antoine Walker and his expiring contract, rookies Josh Childress and Josh Smith, and \$25 million worth of cap room in summer.



Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James (23) loses control of the ball as Atlanta Hawks' Al Harrington (31) watches in the third quarter Jan. 5. While James (25 points per game) and his teammates are off to a strong start this season, the Hawks are mired in mediocrity

Johnson gets feisty on way to physical

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Right away, Randy Johnson ran into trouble in New York.

The Big Unit got into a confrontation on a Manhattan sidewalk with a television cameraman Monday on the way to his New York Yankees physical, then apologized in a statement released later in the day.

Johnson passed all exams Monday, but the Yankees awaited results of blood and other tests that needed more time. Still, New York went ahead and scheduled a news conference for Tuesday to announce the completion of its drawn-out trade with Arizona. In a deal agreed to on Dec. 30, the Yankees are sending pitchers Javier Vazquez and Brad Halsey, catcher Dioner Nunez and \$9 million to the Diamondbacks.

Johnson, a five-time Cy Young Award winner, gets a \$32 million, two-year contract extension that runs through 2007.

Vazquez passed his physical with the Diamondbacks on Monday night. Navarro had to take two physicals Monday — one for Arizona and one for New York, which is acquiring him as part of a separate deal. The Dodgers are receiving four prospects from the Diamondbacks for outfielder Shawn Green and \$10 million. Green and Arizona reached an agreement in principle Sunday on a \$32 million, three-year contract, which allows that trade to be finalized.

Green also passed his physical with Arizona.

Johnson got a taste Monday of how much attention star ballplayers attract in New York. Walking along a Manhattan avenue, he put his long right arm up to block



Johnson, who was accompanied by Yankees director of team security Jerry Laveroni, director of the camera, station spokesman Andrew Pass said.

"Get out of my face, that's all I ask," Johnson said, according to a video of what occurred, which was posted on the station's Web site.

"No cameras," Laveroni said. "Don't get in my face," Johnson then said. "I don't care who you are. Don't get in my face." "I'm just taking a picture," said the cameraman, identified by the station as Vinny Everett.

Responded Johnson: "Don't get in my face, and don't talk back to me, all right."

Johnson issued a statement through agent Alan Nero that was distributed by the Yankees. "Regarding the unfortunate incident that happened this morning as I was on my way to take a physical, I hope that everyone will understand that the past few days have been a bit overwhelming and I wish I had handled the situation differently," Johnson said. "I am very sorry it happened."

Pass later issued a statement for the station that said "in the regular course of CBS2's newsgathering on a midtown street, Randy Johnson's exception to our cameraman's effort to photograph him, attempted to block his lens and insisted that the camera be removed. Johnson has since apologized."

New York's projected rotation currently includes Johnson, Mike



In this image released by WCSB-TV, Randy Johnson puts his hand up to block a camera from WCSB-TV after he left his Manhattan hotel on his way to a physical for the New York Yankees on Monday in New York.

Mustina, Kevin Brown, Carl Pavano and Jaret Wright.

Indians, Juan Gonzalez closing in on deal

CLEVELAND — Free agent outfielder Juan Gonzalez, whose production has plummeted in recent years because of injuries, is close to signing a minor league contract with the Cleveland Indians.

If the two-time American League MVP makes the Indians' 25-man roster in spring training, he would get \$600,000 and would have a chance to earn another \$1.65 million in bonuses based on plate appearances and \$300,000 based on time on the active roster.

"We have no deal yet, but remain hopeful that we can get something done soon," Indians General Manager Mark Shapiro said Monday night.

Once one of baseball's most feared right-handed power hitters, the 35-year-old Gonzalez has been limited to just 185 games the past three seasons with Texas and Kansas City because of a variety of injuries.

and Hermann Maier (551), the overall defending champion. The U.S. skier leads the giant slalom standings with 340 points, followed by Canadian Thomas Grandt (302) and Blardone (266).

Courier, Noah, Novotna, Buchholz elected to tennis hall

NEWPORT, R.I. — Major champions Jim Courier, Yannick Noah and Jana Novotna were elected to the International Tennis Hall of Fame, along with tour administrator Butch Buchholz.

The 2005 class was announced Tuesday by hall president Tony Trabert.

Courier, 34, won the French Open in 1991-92 and the Australian Open in 1992-93, spent 58 weeks ranked No. 1, and helped the United States win the Davis Cup in 1992 and 1995.

Noah, 44, won the 1983 French Open, the first Frenchman to succeed at Roland Garros in 37 years. Ranked as high as No. 3, he finished with 23 titles in singles and 16 in doubles, including the 1984 French Open with Henri Leconte.

Novotna, 36, was the Wimbledon singles champion in 1998 and the runner-up in 1993 and 1997.

Betrano we come to 'the new Mets'

All-Star CF finalizes \$119M deal, joins RHP Martinez in New York

By Hal Bock

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Carlos Beltran joined what he called "the new Mets" on Tuesday, finalizing his \$119 million, seven-year contract with New York.

Beltran said he was impressed that Mets owner Fred Wilpon and general manager Omar Minaya flew down to visit him in his native Puerto Rico.

"I feel proud to be part of a new family: The New York Mets. The new Mets," Beltran said at a news conference at Shea Stadium.

"I call it the new Mets because this organization is going to a new direction, the right direction, the direction of winning."

In introducing his second off-season signing, Minaya called Beltran "one of the best all-around players in baseball."

"When we started putting our team together ... I don't think we were going to be able to sign a Carlos Beltran on top of that, after signing a great pitcher like Pedro Martinez."

Answering questions in English and Spanish, Beltran said the Mets made him feel wanted.

Beltran is the first established player who is just coming into the prime of his career," Minaya said. "Carlos has a rare blend of speed, power, defense and the ability to strike those around him better. Today is a very exciting day in the history of the franchise."

Beltran's deal calls for a \$11 million signing bonus — \$7 million this year and \$2 million in each of the following two seasons. He gets a \$10 million salary this year, \$12 million in each of the following two seasons and \$18.5 million in each of the final four years of the deal. A total of \$20 million in the contract will be deferred.

Knicks: So far, big N.Y. payroll hasn't meant big production

KNICKS, FROM BACK PAGE

The timing couldn't be better with the Knicks' lead over their underdog rival, the Atlanta Hawks, pursuers having shrunk to one game, but only if they're able to capitalize on the stretch of winnable games and raise the bar of expectations to a level more befitting the team's payroll.

Stephon Marbury, with a salary of \$14.6 million, still carries the tag of never having gotten out of the first round of the playoffs. Tim Thomas, with a salary of \$12.9 million, is grabbing just 3.5 rebounds and handing out 1.1 assists per game.

Marbury, making \$6 million, has yet to play for an NBA team that's won more than 30 games. Hardaway, earning \$14.6 million,

While Beltran became the 10th player in baseball history worth \$100 million or more, Minaya spoke with Carlos Delgado's agent, David Sloane, about possibly meeting with the first baseman this week in Puerto Rico.

"We're still working on it," Sloane said.

It's possible the Mets also might revive talks to acquire Sammy Sosa from the Chicago Cubs.

At the Mets' minicamp in Port St. Lucie, Fla., manager Willie Randolph was excited about having Beltran in his lineup. "Just to think about having someone that caliber on your ballclub is awesome," Randolph said.

Beltran will join a retooled roster that includes three-time Cy Young Award winner Martinez.

Minaya knows that the deal 'rebuilding,' but I think it's tough to rebuild in this type of market," Randolph said. "I assumed we would add some veterans and free agents, but so far it's been a lot more than I expected. I think that ownership has made a serious effort to get back to winning ways, and it's exciting to be part of that."

Randolph watched Beltran's outstanding postseason with the Houston Astros, when he hit .355 with eight homers and 14 RBIs.

"He was phenomenal," Randolph said. "Timing is very important in this game. I think for him what he did was always there. It says a lot about him, that he was able to raise his play at the right time."

In other news Monday, the Mets finalized a \$900,000, one-year contract with infielder Miguel Cairo and agreed to a \$2.1 million, one-year deal with pitcher Victor Zambrano, their last remaining player eligible for salary arbitration.

Judge refuses to dismiss Neuheisel suit

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — A judge refused to dismiss a suit filed by former Washington football coach Rick Neuheisel against the university and said he will rule Friday on a similar dismissal motion by the NCAA.

The lawsuit, which seeks unspecified damages for Neuheisel's dismissal in June 2003 after he was accused of dishonesty and violation of NCAA gambling rules, is scheduled to go to trial Jan. 24.

A motion by the university to dismiss the wrongful termination lawsuit was rejected Monday by King County Superior Court Judge Michael S. Specman.

"We're pleased it's going to trial against the university," said Neuheisel's lawyer, Robert M. Sulkin. "I think Rick is looking forward to giving his side of this."

Neuheisel was fired with five years remaining on a six-year contract that paid about \$1.2 million a year. Also at issue is a \$1.5 million loan he received under the contract, which stipulated it would be forgiven if he stayed at Washington through Jan. 1, 2008.

Sports briefs

In four seasons with the Huskies, Neuheisel compiled a 33-16 record, including a Rose Bowl victory in 2001 and No. 3 national ranking.

He was fired in June 2003 by then-athletic director Barbara Hedges, who said he lied to her when he denied covering for a job with the San Francisco 49ers, then lied again the same day when he insisted he had never participated in gambling pools, although he had won \$11,219 in the previous two NCAA men's basketball tournaments.

Miller second in men's GS

ADELBODEN, Switzerland — Bode Miller, who is trying to become the first American to win the overall title, finished second in the men's giant slalom on Tuesday. Miller led the overall standings with 988 points, followed by Austrians Benjamin Raich (690)

SPORTS

Chargers QB Brees would like loyalty,
long-term contract from team,
Page 28



The best money can buy?

Knicks getting only marginal return on NBA's highest payroll

BY CHRIS SHERIDAN
The Associated Press

P GREENBURGH, N.Y. — It's time for the New York Knicks to come up with a new marketing slogan.

They can borrow the phrase coach Lenny Wilkens uttered Monday, which happened to be the exact same quote team president Isiah Thomas came up with the night before: "We're not fooling ourselves."

By declaring the roster he assembled a .500 outfit, Thomas seemed to be making a concerted effort to lower expectations for the league's highest-paid team as he moves into his second year at the helm.

The Knicks' record (17-17) says they're a .500 team, and they freely admit that the prospect of finishing in first place with a 41-41 record doesn't sound all that bad.

"Let's get everybody healthy and see," Wilkens said after practice Monday. "Are we just .500, or what? Maybe we're worse."

After a whirlwind 12½ months since Thomas replaced Scott Layden, the Knicks are coming to grips with the reality of who they are despite a league-high payroll of \$103 million and a star player who has proclaimed himself the NBA's best point guard — a declaration that was immediately followed by a four-game losing streak.

"I don't think we're a great team right now, I never said so," Wilkens said. "Certainly we can have a say in a lot of things, but I don't think we've found out who we are. We haven't had everybody here to do that yet. When we do, we'll get a better handle, but if you look at our club now, yeah, we're not more than (.500)."

"My thing is, you've got to ask yourself if you're playing to win a championship, or are you playing to make money. I know I'm playing for the championship, and I think we all have to ask ourselves that as individuals."

Stephon Marbury
Knicks point guard



New York Knicks' Stephon Marbury (3) recently proclaimed himself the best point guard in the NBA — and the team promptly went on a four-game losing streak. Despite a league-high \$103 million payroll, the Knicks are 17-17 but leading the underachieving Atlantic Division.

The feeling around the locker room seemed much more positive just a couple weeks ago, before Jamal Crawford went down with a toe injury expected to keep him sidelined for at least two more weeks.

New York strung together consecutive victories against Charlotte, Orlando and Minnesota to move three games over .500 at

16-13, but followed with a stretch of four consecutive lopsided losses to New Jersey, Sacramento, Miami and Cleveland.

"I thought that the Cleveland game, the dam broke. But tonight they put it back together again and we move forward," Thomas said after New York ended its skid with a 113-105 victory over Portland.

"Right now, [compared to] where we were last year and where we're trying to get to, progress here is being made."

Sunday night's victory quieted the speculation over Wilkens' job security, but Thomas' statements can be taken to mean that someone will take a fall if the Knicks dip too far below their new break-even barometer.

Injuries to Crawford, Penny Hardaway, Michael Sweetney and Tim Thomas have taken away much of the Knicks' depth, although they are entering a stretch of schedule in which none of their next six opponents — beginning with Tuesday night's game against the 3-29 New Orleans Hornets — has a winning record.



Knicks coach Lenny Wilkens, above left, appears to have job security right now, but with hands-on team president Isiah Thomas watching, that situation could change if the Knicks don't rise above their .500 record.

SEE KNICKS ON PAGE 31

Lakers lean on players other than Bryant to complete comeback over Garnett, Timberwolves

Page 29



Mets finalize contract with All-Star Beltran, introduce latest addition to retooled roster

Page 31